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DRAMATIC MISCELLANIES:

CONSISTING OF
CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS

ON SEVERAL
PLAYS OF SHAKSPEARE:

WITH
A REVIEW OF HIS PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS, AND
THOSE OF VARIOUS EMINENT WRITERS,

AS REPRESENTED
BY MR. GARRICK, AND
OTHER CELEBRATED COMEDIANS.

WITH ANECDOTES OF DRAMATIC POETS, ACTORS, &c.

BY THOMAS DAVIES,
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DAVID GARRICK, Esq.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

L O N D O N:

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MDCC LXXXV.



DRAMATIC
MISCELLANIES.

Hamlet.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Obligations of the public to Mr. Steevens and Mr. Malone.—The time when Hamlet was first acted, not certainly authenticated.—Shakspeare's frequent additions to those plays he valued.—Hamlet, first play of Shakspeare acted at D. of York's theatre.—Popularity of Hamlet.—Francisco and Boheme.—Voltaire's disingenuity.—Rivals of the watch.—The word stomach explained.—A little more than kin, and less than kind.—Too much i'th' fun.—A common thought nobly expressed.—Dr. Johnson supposed to be mistaken.—Parallel passage, in the Sup-
VOL. III. B *plicants*

plicants of Æschylus, to the advice of Laertes.—Kings of Denmark lovers of Rhenish.—Their intoxication.—Masque of the Queen of Sheba.—A whole court inebriated.—Dram of base.—A passage rectified with a small alteration.—Reverend Mr. Robert-son.—Complete steel.—Beetles o'er his base.—Confin'd to fast in fires.—Lucian's Dialogue of Menippus, &c.—Juice of cursed Hebenon.—Galen, Dioscorides, Celsus, &c.—Distracted globe.—The first act of Hamlet unequalled.—Ghost of Darius, from Æschylus.—A good lesson for princes.—Dr. Potter and Mr. Rumney.—Ghost of Laius.—Of Ninus, in Semiramis.—La Clairon, Le Kin, and the property-man.—Discussion of the manner of addressing the Ghost by Hamlet.—Taylor, Sir W. Davenant, Betterton.—Macklin and Henderson.—Colly Cibber and Mr. Addison.—Booth and Wilks.—Booth's superiority in the Ghost.

ALL lovers of Shakspeare are indebted to Mr. Steevens and Mr. Malone, for

for their diligent researches into every thing which related to this great man and his family; and more especially to the immortal part of him, his writings. The chronological series of his plays, with large and instructive notes, is a very curious and interesting composition, in which Mr. Malone has endeavoured to authenticate the order, and fix the dates of all the plays written by our great poet.

After a most strict examination into the time when Hamlet made its first appearance, Mr. Malone is obliged to leave that circumstance rather undetermined; though he has, with some degree of probability, placed it to the year 1596. In my opinion, the first sketch of it was brought on the stage more early. In all his pieces, for which he entertained a predilection, it is granted he made such additions as he thought would advance the credit of the play, and make it more palatable to an audience; and, as no one of his tragedies, by consent of history and tradition, was

more relished, by the inhabitants of this metropolis, than Hamlet, we have no reason to doubt, that he, from time to time, threw in such materials as would improve the original stock: so that the first and last Hamlet might be, in some respects, as dissimilar as Pope's Rape of the Lock with the Sylphs, and the same poem without them.

The first play of Shakspeare, acted after the Restoration at the Duke of York's theatre, if we may depend on the Narrative of Downs, was Hamlet; the principal character was acted by Betterton, who often exhibited himself in this part, at the opening of the theatre, as an infallible lure to draw company. Wilks at Drury-lane, and Ryan at Lincoln's-inn-fields, frequently chose this favourite part to open the winter season at these rival play-houses. From the first representation of Hamlet, to the present day, we may reasonably conclude, that no dramatic piece whatever, has laid hold of the public

public affection so strongly, and been acted so frequently.

Act I. Scene I.

FRANCISCO.

For this relief much thanks : 'tis bitter cold,
And I am seek at heart.

The right expression of a simple thought is sometimes of considerable and unexpected consequence to the speaker. Mr. Boheme was, about the year 1718, accidentally seen by Rich, when playing with some itinerants at Stratford le Bow, who soon distinguished him from his companions, and hired him, at a small income, to act at his theatre in Lincoln's-inn-fields. I have been told, that this actor was, on his first trial, cast into the trifling part of Francisco. His unaffected, yet natural manner, of pronouncing this short speech, roused the auditors to an observation of his merit. His salary was immediately increased by the

B 3

manager,

manager, and he afterwards proved a great ornament to the stage.

I D E M.

Not a mouse stirring.

Voltaire, who, in examining the merit of our author's plays, disdains the use of no unfair method to depreciate them, has ridiculed this passage of Hamlet, as if the mention of a mouse were beneath the dignity of tragedy. But could there be a properer mode of describing the solitariness which reigned in the place, than by saying, that every thing was so still that the soft tread of a small reptile had not been heard? The insignificance of an object does by no means lessen the general idea. Have not the most celebrated ancient dramatic writers admitted thoughts as low, and words more gross and offensive, into their best tragedies? How does the nice ear of a Frenchman relish the filthy plasters and nasty rags which Philoctetes applies to his sores? Yet Sophocles understood nature, and the laws

laws of decorum, I presume, as perfectly as Voltaire. Tiresias's description, in Antigone, of the ordure and filth of the ill-omened birds who had fed on the carcass of Polynices, would raise a nausea in the stomach of a delicate French critic! Men of solid judgment and true taste despise such refinement.

B E R N A R D O.

If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,
The *rivals* of my watch——

Dr. Warburton will have *rivals* to mean *partners*. Blunt derives the word from *rivus*, or *rivulus*, or from *men fetching water from a neighbouring river*, or *rivulet*. Hanmer says, *rivals* are those men who watch upon an adjoining ground; by this interpretation, they, who were to succeed Bernardo, must have indeed gone through very hard service, as they were called from one act of duty to another. But, without a learned explanation, it is plain, by *rivals*, that Shakspeare means, those men

who were appointed next to relieve soldiers on the watch. They were indeed so far *rivals*, as they were successors to others, and waiting to occupy their places.

H O R A T I O.

Some strange eruption to the state.

‘Some political distemper, which will break out in dangerous consequences.’

I D E M.

That hath a *stomach* in it.

Stomach, says Dr. Johnson, in the times of Shakspeare, was used for *constancy* and *resolution*. The original, *stomachas*, has various significations besides the *stomach*.— In Cicero, it means, in one place, *choler*; in another, *humour*, or *fancy*. *Ille mihi risum magis quam stomachum. Ludi apparatusissimi, sed non tui stomachi*. In Shakspeare, *stomach* generally stands for excessive pride, or insolence of power. Queen Katharine, speaking of Cardinal Wolsey, ‘He was of

an

an unbounded stomach. Henry VIII. act IV.
I think, in this place, 'hath a *stomach* in it,'
means 'the business is of an alarming
nature.'

M A R C E L L U S.

Some say, that, ever 'gainst that season comes
In which our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long.
And then, they say, no *spirit* dare stir abroad;
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy *takes*, nor witch has power to charm;
So hallow'd, and so gracious, is the time!

These lines, which are omitted in the representation of the play, are remarkably beautiful; they are invigorated by fancy and harmonized by versification.

The word *spirit*, in the 4th line, should be, I think, contracted to *sprite*, or *sp'rit*; both are, I believe, familiar to our old dramatists.

'No fairy *takes*,' in the 6th line, is explained by Lear's curse on Goneril, in the second act of that play:

———— Strike her young bones,
Ye *taking* airs, with lameness!

Scene

Scene II.

The King, Queen, Hamlet, &c.

H A M L E T.

A little more than kin, and less than kind.

Hanmer supposes that this might formerly have been a proverbial expression; but vulgar sayings or proverbs are gathered from such things as frequently happen, and not from circumstances and events which are unusual.

The meaning of this line, however, variously understood by different commentators, seems to be very obvious:

‘As I am the rightful heir to the crown, I am more than your relation; I am your king. As you have deprived me of my birthright, and committed the crime of incest with my mother, it is impossible I can have any affection or kindness for you.’

It should be observed, that, whenever Hamlet speaks *of* the King, it is in terms of reproach and of the utmost contempt; nor does he ever seem to pay him the least respect,

respect, in his behaviour or address, when he speaks *to* him.

I D E M.

Not so, my lord ; I am too much i'th' fun.

‘ I am so far from being obscured with shadows, that I am scorched with the rays of your sunshine.’

Q U E E N.

————— All that live must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.

The thought is common ; but the expression is awfully striking, and extremely beautiful.

K I N G.

No jocund health, that Denmark drinks to-day,
But the loud cannon to the clouds shall tell.

I cannot think, with Dr. Johnson, that these lines particularly mark the King's fondness for drinking. Drunkenness was the national vice, as Hamlet himself afterwards confesses.

This seems to have been pointed out, by
the

the author, as the King's first appearance in public after his usurping the crown and marrying his sister; and is therefore celebrated as a gala-day. He therefore seizes an opportunity to compliment Hamlet's concession, as he would fain term it, in his own favour, by firing off the cannon to his honour at every toast.

H A M L E T.

————— To post

With such *dexterity* to incestuous sheets,

Dexterity for *rapidity*.

I D E M.

Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven,
Ere I had seen that day, Horatio!

This strongly marks the resentful, not to say implacable, disposition of Hamlet; and is of a piece with his not putting his uncle to death, in the third act of the play, when he was at his devotion, lest, in that instant, he should send his soul to heaven.

I D E M.

I D E M.

My father!—Methinks I see my father.

H O R A T I O.

Where, my lord?

Horatio, by that question, imagined that Hamlet saw the shade of his father.

Scene III.

Laertes and Ophelia.

L A E R T E S.

The charest maid is prodigal enough,
If she unmask her beauties to the moon.
Virtue itself 'scapes not calumnious strokes;
The canker galls the infants of the spring.

In the advice of Danaus to his daughters,
in the Supplicants of Æschylus, to guard
against the inticements of youth, there are
some lines which bear a strong resem-
blance of Laertes's instructions to Ophelia.

————— I see your blooming age
Inforcing soft desire. I know how hard
To guard the lovely flowers that grace that season.
The queen of love proclaims their opening bloom;
Ah!

Ah! would she suffer it to remain uncropt!
 For on the delicate tints that kindling glow
 On beauty's vermeil cheek, each roving youth
 With melting wishes darts the am'rous glance.

Potter's *Æschylus*.

P O L O N I U S.

Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
 But not express'd in fancy.

That is, not fantastic, tawdry, or fop-
 pish.

I D E M.

————— To thy own self be true,
 Thou can'st not then be false to any man.

This is agreeable to one of the golden
 rules of Pythagoras:

—Παντων δε μαλιστα' αισχυνο σαινον.

Sed maxime omnium verere teipsum.

I D E M.

As he drains his draughts of *Rhenish* down.

The kings of Denmark have been con-
 stant drinkers of *Rhenish* wine. It was the
 custom

custom at Copenhagen, when Lord Molefworth was our ambaffador to that court, in 1692, for the king to have his beaker of *Rhenish*.* Drinking to excefs was the vice of the court and nation; and our author muft have known, that, in his time, the King of Denmark, brother-in-law to James I. had no averfion to large draughts of wine. Sir John Harrington, in a letter to a friend, describes a mafque, called the Queen of Sheba, at which the two kings and the whole court were prefent, and all of them moft fhamefully intoxicated. The Queen of Sheba and his Danifh Majefty paid and received the fame compliment as Don Quixote and Sancho did to each other, from the operation of a precious balfam in Sancho's ftomach, when the latter, after a bloody battle with the fheep and
their

* The kettle-drums and trumpets, which are ranged in a large place before the palace, proclaim aloud the very minute the king fits down to table.
MOLESWORTH.

their herdsmen, was examining the Don's mouth, and counting the grinders he had lost in the conflict. The two drunken Majesties, of Great-Britain and Denmark, says Harrington, were so far inebriated, that the gentlemen of the bed-chamber were obliged to carry them on their shoulders to their beds. Perhaps our author's knowledge of this Bacchanalian bout was one reason why he insists so much on the drunkenness of the royal Dane.

H A M L E T.

————— The dram of base
Doth all the noble substance of worth out,
To his own scandal.

The admirable reflection of Hamlet, upon national vice and personal blemish, on account of the length of the play, are entirely curtailed. Our author, as excellent in morals as he was happy in character and passion, makes a just observation on the danger of indulging one favourite passion, vice, or folly; which, he says,
taints

taints the whole man, and tarnishes all his virtues, however great and eminent. This is, I believe, that plague of the heart which Solomon calls upon his people to pray against in the dedication of the temple. The apostle James, in his Epistle, hath a sentiment very fimilar to that of Shakspeare: *For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*

The text, as it stands in the quoted passage,——

————— That dram of base
Doth all the noble substance of worth out,
To his own scandal,——

is given up by some of the commentators, as very difficult and obscure; notwithstanding the explanation of Mr. Steevens, it still seems harsh, if not unintelligible.

The very trifling alteration, of adding a letter to one word, and the changing two letters for one in another, will, I believe, restore to us the original reading.

————— The dram of base
Doth all the noble substance *oft work* out,
To his own scandal.

“As a small quantity of certain medicines, by its potent operation, deprives the body of strength and firmness, so this alloy of vice, this *dram of base*, works out, or renders useless, all the noble qualities of the mind.”

When I read this proposed emendation to the reverend and learned Mr. Robertson, he not only concurred with me, but assured me he had himself made the same amendment.

I D E M.

That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel—

Mr. Steevens, from Olaus Wormius, proves it to be a custom of the Danish kings to be buried in their armour. Seward, Earl of Northumberland, who lived in the days of Edward the Confessor, was, by his desire, buried armed at all points. But, what is more strange, Fuller, in his Worthies, relates, that one of our old savage warriors would go to bed, dressed in his armour, to his new-married bride.

H O R A -

H O R A T I O.

——— Summit of the cliff,
That *beetles* o'er his base into the sea.

If I understand the meaning of the word *beetle*, in this place, it looks *frowningly*, or *dreadfully*, on the ocean.—The same thought occurs, with great force, in Southern's Oroonoko, act V.

——— Oh ! for a whirlwind's wing,
To hurry us to yonder cliff, that frowns
Upon the flood.

H O R A T I O.

Heaven will *direct* it.

Dr. Farmer thinks the author might have written *detect* it. But the present reading includes that sense, and something more: 'Heaven will discover what is amiss, and point out the means of correction.'

G H O S T.

Confin'd to *fast in fires*.

By *fasting in fires*, we are to understand the punishment of purgatory, or the purification

fication of the soul by fire. I have somewhere read, that it was formerly an usual threat of the Roman Catholic priests to their penitents, that, if they did not fast here, they must fast in a worst place.--- The word *fast* stands here, by metonymy, for *punished*.

I D E M.

———— I am forbid

To tell the secrets of my prison-house, &c.
But this eternal blazon must not be
To ears of flesh and blood.

In Lucian's Dialogue of Menippus and Philonides, there is a sentiment which so strongly resembles this caution of the Ghost, that I am induced to believe our Shakspeare had read the translation, which was published, in English verse and Latin prose, about the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign.

Philonides asks Menippus to discover to him the laws and decrees of the infernal judges. Menippus informs him, that it is not lawful for him to lay open, in the
upper

upper world, what he had heard in the regions below, nor to divulge the infernal secrets, lest Rhadamanthus should punish him for it.

I D E M.

With juice of cursed *hebenon* in a vial.

Dr. Gray is of opinion, that the author, or his transcriber, by a metathesis, put *hebenon* for *beneson*, which is *henbane*. I believe it would puzzle the most curious searcher to find the word *beneson* in any of our botanical books; and I could wish the word *henbane* were substituted for *hebenon*, at least upon the stage. The doctor has quoted Galen, Dioscorides, and Wepfer, to prove its narcotic qualities. The two last ascribe to it the power of producing a delirium. But the doctor did not know, perhaps, that Hippocrates and Celsus admitted the *henbane* into their prescriptions for certain disorders, and especially for melancholy. Scribonius Largus prescribes it, in some cases, under the name of *altericus*.

C 3

I D E M.

I D E M.

So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,
Will sate itself in a celestial bed,
And prey on garbage.

Thus Angelo, in Measure for Measure,

————— It is I,
Who lying by a violet in the sun,
Do as the carrion does, not as the flower,
Corrupt with virtuous season.

H A M L E T.

In this distracted globe.

Shakspeare frequently compares the body of man to the world, or to a kingdom, As, in King John, act IV.——

Nay, in the body of this fleshly land,
This kingdom, this confine of blood and breath——

And in Julius Cæsar, act II.——

————— The state of man,
Like to a little kingdom, suffers then
The nature of an insurrection.

I D E M.

Swear upon my sword.

There

There are so many valuable notes on this passage, in the last edition of Johnson and Steevens, 1778, that I shall only observe, it was a practice in chivalry for knights to swear on the sword.

I D E M.

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

The poet, by this observation, intended to humble the presumption and daring pride of certain philosophers, who, by arrogantly attributing known effects to causes which no human wisdom can ascertain, have disgraced their writings and misled their readers.

This act of Hamlet is singularly excellent. For richness of matter, dignity of action, and variety of character, it may challenge a preference to the first act of any tragedy, ancient or modern.—When the Ghost is first announced by the centinels, our expectation is mightily raised ;

his appearance strikes with awe. The pathetic address of Horatio fixes attention, and raises the admiration of the spectators. But the vision is judiciously prevented from answering Horatio's questions; for that would have lessened the curiosity, as well as the terror, arising from the interview between the Ghost and Hamlet; which, for boldness of invention, strength of imagery, energy of expression, and glow of passion, exceeds any thing which can be compared with it.

The Ghost of Darius, in the *Perseæ* of Æschylus, is, I suppose, the only vision of the Greek drama, which can be brought in competition with that of Hamlet. Darius comes not a volunteer from the dead, but is raised to the upper world by an incantation; four lines of which contain an excellent lesson to monarchs, and should be held in everlasting remembrance by princes who rashly engage in war and bloodshed:

He

He in realms-unpeopling war
Wasted not his subjects blood ;
Godlike in his will to spare,
In his councils wise and good.

POTTER.

Instead of giving information to the invokers of his shade, Darius questions them concerning the reasons why they desired his presence. After being acquainted with the unhappy circumstances which attended the invasion of Greece by his son, Xerxes, and after some discourse with his queen, Atossa, and pitying the fate of Persia, he then advises them to abstain from wars, as ruinous, and, in their end, destructive ; and though, at first, he could not tell the reason why they evoked him from his peaceful mansion, he now, on a sudden, describes circumstantially the unhappy fate of the Persian host in Greece.*

As

* In the Eumenides of Æschylus, the Ghost of Clytemnestra urges the Goddesses of Vengeance to punish Orestes ; but these terrible ladies are fast asleep,

As the humiliation of the Persian king, and the exaltation and triumph of Greece, is the subject of Darius's appearance, we cannot wonder that a scene, which, in reading appears tedious to us, should be much admired and applauded in Athens. We are told, by Dr. Potter, that *Æschylus* is the favourite poet of Mr. Rumney, whose admirable pencil was employed on the Ghost of Darius. Nor can I think that the interview of Hamlet and his father's shade, is a subject less interesting, to call forth the attention, and exercise the genius of the most eminent painter.

In the *Oedipus* of Dryden and Lee, the Ghost of Laius is raised from hell by an incantation, part of which is borrowed from *Macbeth*. The occasion is important; and the composition of the whole, however inferior

asleep, and answer the Ghost by snoring. Can any thing, in modern plays, be more ridiculous? Dryden's God of Dreams, in his *Indian Queen*, is not so extravagant!

inferior to Shakspeare, is poetical and animated.

I am at a loss to know, whether the French stage would have been decorated with a ghost, had not Voltaire been struck with that of Hamlet. Thence he warmed his Semiramis with that fire which he stole from the man whom he admires, envies, vilifies, and grossly misrepresents.

As the Ghost of Darius made his appearance before the whole Persian court, so does that of Ninus in the full presence of Semiramis and the court of Babylon, which he strikes with terror and amazement. He is ushered in with loud claps of thunder and flashes of lightning. But, although the author prepared the audience for something singularly awful and terrifying, yet, after all, Ninus makes but a small figure. That little which he speaks is wrapped up in oracular obscurity; and the play, though certainly marked with genius, is so fabulous in its plot, so perplexed in its conduct, and so improbable
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in its catastrophe, that it will require no ghost from the dead to prophecy it will not very long be a favourite drama of the French stage. The author was highly indebted to the action of *La Clairon* and *Le Kin*: the distraction which the latter expressed, when rising from the tomb of Ninus, after killing his mother, was attended with perpetual shouts of applause.

At the last rehearsal of *Semiramis*, which, in France, is equal to a first representation, a whimsical conversation passed between the property-man, who presided over the thunder and lightning, and *Madame la Clairon*. As the fellow was preparing his bolts and flashes, he called out to the lady, 'Pray, madam, will you have your thunder long or short?' She replied, *As long as Madame Dumefnil's*. This excited laughter, which disturbed the theatrical process; but the French are quickly moved to risibility.

Hamlet's address to the Ghost, in this act, is justly esteemed one of those situations

ations in which the actor of merit may display, to the full, his greatest abilities. --- Taylor was the original performer of Hamlet; and his excellencies, in that character, were so remarkable, that, from the remembrance of them, Sir William Davenant taught Betterton a lesson which gained him universal and lasting reputation. His manner of address to the vision is recorded by Cibber, in language so lively, and terms so apposite, that the reader will not be displeased to see them quoted here:

‘ He opened the scene with a pause of mute amazement; then, rising slowly to a solemn, trembling voice, he made the Ghost equally terrible to the spectator and himself; and, in the descriptive part of the natural emotions which the ghastly vision gave him, the boldness of his expostulation was still governed by decency; manly, but not braving; his voice never rising to that seeming outrage or wild defiance of what he naturally revered.’ And
in

in this manner, our late admirable Roscius addressed the vision.

Mr. Macklin, whose judgment merits the utmost deference, differs in opinion, respecting the behaviour of Hamlet to the Ghost, from Betterton and Garrick. With pleasure I have heard him recite the speech of Hamlet to the Ghost, which he did with much force and energy. After the short ejaculation of 'Angels and ministers of grace, defend us!' he endeavoured to conquer that fear and terror into which he was naturally thrown by the first sight of the vision, and uttered the remainder of the address calmly, but respectfully, and with a firm tone of voice, as from one who had subdued his timidity and apprehension. Mr. Henderson, a most judicious actor, and accurate speaker, seems to have embraced a method not unlike that of Mr. Macklin.

How far tradition may be permitted to govern, in this question, I will not say: but Downs, the stage-historian, in his
peculiar

peculiar phrase, informs us, 'That Mr. Betterton took every particle of Hamlet from Sir William Davenant, who had seen Mr. Taylor, who was taught by Mr. Shakspeare himself.'

If we give credit to Downs, we must grant that the author was the best interpreter of his own meaning. Nor can I, indeed, conceive, that any sudden resolution, on the appearance of so questionable a shape as the vision of a dead father, can so far support a son as to be free from terror and affright. It is not in nature to assume such courage as will withstand a sight so awful and tremendous.

Towards the close of Hamlet's speech, the words themselves are strongly expressive of the uncommon impression still remaining on his mind :

And we, fools of nature,
So horridly to shake our disposition
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls.

Colley Cibber, when in company with Mr. Addison at the tragedy of Hamlet, tells

tells us, that they were both surprised at the vociferous manner in which Wilks spoke to the Ghost. This was greatly censured by them both, and with justice; for awe and terror will never excite a loud and intemperate exertion of the voice.

Wilks was so far mistaken, in this treatment of Hamlet's Ghost, that Booth, one day at rehearsal, reproached him for it. 'I thought,' said he, 'Bob, that last night you wanted to play at fifty-cuffs with me: you bullied that which you ought to have revered. When I acted the Ghost with Betterton, instead of my awing him, he terrified me. But divinity hung round that man!' To this rebuke, Wilks, with his usual modesty, replied,——
* Mr. Betterton and Mr. Booth could always act as they pleased: he, for his part, must do as well as he could.'

The Ghost, though not meanly represented since the time of Booth, has never been equal to the action of that comedian. His slow, solemn, and under tone of
voice,

voice, his noiseless tread, as if he had been composed of air, and his whole deportment, inspired the audience with that feeling which is excited by awful astonishment! The impression of his appearance in this part was so powerful, upon a constant frequenter of the theatres for near sixty years, that he assured me, when, long after Booth's death, he was present at the tragedy of Hamlet, as soon as the name of the Ghost was announced on the stage, he felt a kind of awe and terror, 'of which,' said he, 'I was soon cured by his appearance.' Quin, who loved and admired Booth, some years before he left the stage, to oblige his old friend, Ryan, acted the Ghost with the approbation of the public, and as near to the manner of his old master as he possibly could.

Let me add here, that the situation of Æneas, when he is surprised by the vision of his wife, Creusa, is similar to that of Hamlet, and is strongly pictured by the exclamation of ———

Obstupui, steteruntque comæ, et vox faucibus hæsit!

These words are so expressive of extreme terror of mind, that no fortitude could enable any man to recover from it by calm effort of deliberation. The senses are too much disturbed to be brought into their proper tone by any thing but time.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Polonius and Reynolds.---Fencing.---Some passages explained.---Meaning of quoting.---Polonius's character ;---discussed at large.---Polonius always acted by low comedians.---Garrick's mistake.---Woodward's failure.---Hamlet's reception of his school-fellows.---A King's part, in a play, not always desirable to the actor.---Reproach of Demosthenes to Æschines.---Garrick and Barry.---Lungs tickled with a fere.---Players inhibition.---Crying out on the question.---Hercules and his load.---Hawk from a handsaw.---Boys acting of female parts.---Altitude of a chioppine.---What a chioppine is.---Clergy and players at variance.---Remarkable story to the honour of a comedian.---Visage warm'd.---Baron and Betterton.---Remarkable story of guilt acknowledged by a scene of a play.---Dr. Barrowby and a London apprentice.---Tent him to the quick.

quick.---*Murder of Mr. Derby, by Fisher.*

---*Behaviour of Fisher at the play of Ham-*

let.---*Ben Jonson's quarrel with the players.*

---*Wilks.*---*His defect in utterance.*---*Bar-*

ry.---*Garrick's superiority.*

ACT II. Scene I.

Polonius and Reynold.

POLONIUS.

Drinking — *fencing.*

FENCING is here, I think, put, in our author's phrase, for *brawling* or *quarrelling*. A *fencer*, in the days of Shakspeare, was generally understood to be one apt to be contentious and quarrelsome.

IDEM.

Breathe his faults so *quaintly*.

That is, so *artfully* so *discreetly*.

IDEM.

And I believe it is a *fetch* of warrant.

• I think

‘I think it a very justifiable mode of enquiring into my son’s conduct.’

The scene between Polonius and his servant, Reynold, has not been acted for more than a century, and is by no means essential to the play.

O P H E L I A.

And to the last bended their lights on me.

The first indication of his assumed madness Hamlet gives to Ophelia, from a supposition that she would impart immediate information of it to her father.

P O L O N I U S.

I am sorry that with better judgment

I had not *quoted* him.

To *quote* is to write notes and observations from sermons or books, or to make remarks in a table-book or memorandum. In doing this, a mistake or blunder may easily be made.

D 3

Scene

Scene II.

POLONIUS.

My liege and madam.

In the delineation of Polonius' character, two great writers, Dr. Warburton and Dr. Johnson, differ widely. The first makes him a weak man and a pedantic statesman. The other places him in a much superior rank : with him, Polonius is a man who has been bred in courts, exercised in business, stored with observation, confident of his knowledge, proud of his eloquence, but declining into dotage ; in short, it is by the advance of age alone that Dr. Johnson solves the seeming inconsistency in the conduct of Polonius. The whole argument is elaborately written ; but I cannot submit to that decision which pronounces that this statesman was ever strong in intellect, or eloquent in discourse. There is but one passage in the play which favours the supposed dereliction
of

of this man's faculties ; and that is in the instructions he gives his servant, in the first scene of the 2d act, relating to his observations of his son's conduct ; but, in the recapitulation of precepts, or maxims, independent of each other, and where there is no concatenation of reasoning, a very young, as well as an old man, may easily incur a lapse of memory. In all other situations of the character, he is ever ready and furnished with such materials as are suited to his incapacity and presumption. His logic and rhetoric, to prove that Hamlet is in love with his daughter, are sufficiently flowing, and, though weak and absurd, betray no declension of his faculties. Such powers of mind as Polonius ever had, he seems to enjoy with vigour ; and can boast, with Charon, the *cruda viridisque senectus*. — While the body remains unhurt, by disease or outward accident, the mind, by being kept in continual exercise, stretches its faculties, and improves more and more. I

could produce instances in Tully and Bacon; and, with still more propriety, in Sophocles and Bishop Hoadley. But why need I go farther than Dr. Johnson himself? He is advanced some years above the age of seventy, without the least symptom of intellectual decay. Is not his last work, of the Critical and Biographical Prefaces, equal to any book he hath written?

But indeed there are abundant instances of the radical weakness of this character disseminated throughout the play. Hamlet, notwithstanding he loves his daughter Ophelia, wherever he meets Polonius, turns him into ridicule, and never speaks of him, when absent, but with scorn and contempt. Hamlet is thirty years old; he could not but know if Polonius ever had been wise; and would not meanly take the advantage of doting age to hold him up to laughter. When the Prince dismisses the Players, he takes the manager aside; he bids him follow Polonius, and
take

take care he does not mock him. To ridicule the infirmities of age was not the Player's business; but the evident absurdity and folly of the man justified the caution. To conclude: when Hamlet drags the dead body of this wretched politician from his hiding-place, he sums up his character in very farcaetical terms:

— Indeed this counsellor

Is now most still, most secret, and most grave,
Who was, in life, a foolish prating knave.

This he says, in the presence of the Queen, after he had confessed that his madness was assumed. Polonius is in no respect, that I know of, to be esteemed. He is more obsequious and officious than he ought to be; a conduct which borders on knavery.

Mirabel's character of Witwou'd, in the Way of the World, may help us to solve the difficulties which arise from some pertinent observations in the old statesman: 'He is a fool with a good memory; but that failing, his folly is betrayed by not
having

having recourse to his common-place book.³ Every man must recollect, amongst his acquaintance, some very silly people, who surprise their hearers by throwing out remarks above their usual course of converse. To this tribe of men, we may apply a line of Mr. Pope :

The fool lies hid in inconsistencies.

The constant practice of the stage, from the revival of Hamlet, soon after the Restoration, to this day, may perhaps contribute to justify my opinion of this character. Polonius was always acted by what is termed a low comedian : by Lovell, Nokes, and Cross, in former times ; who were succeeded by Griffin, Hippisley, Taswell, and Shuter ; and these again by Wilson, Baddeley, and Edwin, in the present times.

About five and twenty years since, Mr. Garrick had formed a notion, that the character of Polonius had been mistaken and misrepresented by the players, and that

that he was not designed by the author to excite laughter, and become an object of ridicule. He imagined, I suppose, with his friend Dr. Johnson, that his false reasoning and false wit were mere accidents in character; and that his leading feature was dotage encroaching upon wisdom, which, by the bye, is no object of theatrical satire, and far from being what is averred by the great commentator, a noble design in the author. Full of this opinion, Mr. Garrick persuaded Woodward, on his benefit night, to put himself in the part of Polonius. And what was the consequence? — The character, divested of his ridiculous vivacity, appeared to the audience flat and insipid. His dress was very different from what the part generally wore: the habit was grave and rich, cloth of scarlet and gold. Whether this was in imitation of some statesman of the times, I will not be positive, though I have heard it so asserted. So little were the audience pleased with Woodward, or Woodward

ward with himself, that he never afterwards attempted Polonius.

POLONIUS.

————— A short tale to make,
Fell into a sadness, &c.

The statesman's description of the several stages of Hamlet's madness, gives no proof that his faculties are declining; but rather of an inventive and ductile mind, which is ready to propagate any tale, or advance any proposition, which might serve to prove his great wisdom and sagacity.

I D E M.

If he love her not——

We see, by this, the drift of the cunning statesman; who, by this discovery of Hamlet's passion for his daughter, hopes to gain him for a son-in-law. This is, in our author, a stroke of nature.

H A M L E T.

You are a *fishmonger*.

The word *fishmonger* is made use of by Hamlet to disguise his real meaning, which is, 'You are a *fisherman*, and angle for me; you want to know my real designs or to pluck out the heart of my mystery.'

I D E M.

For, if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog—

Dr. Warburton's noble interpretation of this passage cannot be too much commended. Though the thought is not very similar, it brings to my mind what Diogenes said to one who reproached him for living in filthy places: *The sun visits kennels, yet is not defiled.*

I D E M.

I am poor in thanks.

Hamlet receives his old school-fellows with a mixture of real distrust and affected

cere-

ceremony; they come upon him un-
wares, unannounced, and uninvited.

I D E M.

Nay, then, I have an eye of you.

‘I see plainly I must be on my guard.
These men, I find, are mere agents of
mighty employers; and are no other than
court-spies.’

I D E M.

How noble in reason! How infinite in faculties!
In form and moving, how like a god! &c.

In uttering this beautiful description of
man and his powers, the energy of Gar-
rick was very striking; and the noble
figure and movement of Barry added a
double force to the sentiment. Notwith-
standing this, I am of opinion, that, in
this argument, in which Hamlet pretends
to account for his melancholy, the actor
is generally too tame and temperate in
speech

speech and action, and too forgetful of the part he has assumed.

IDE M.

He that plays the King shall be welcome.

The parts of Kings are not always the most coveted by actors. King Duncan in Macbeth, Claudius in Hamlet, &c. are rather of the second or third class than the first. Nor was the diadem or the purple robe a certain proof of characteristical superiority amongst the Greek players. Demosthenes, in his oration De Falsa Legatione, upbraids Æschines with his being an actor of third parts; but, says the orator, the great emoluments, sought after, by these low actors, in the exhibition of kings, were to enter the stage dressed in the royal habiliments, bearing in their hands the regal sceptre. 'Theodosius and Aristodemus, the prime actors, often personated Antigone, while you, Æschines, strutted in King Creon in the same play.'

ROSENCRANDS.

We coted them on the way.

To *cote* is a Shropshire term for to over-
take.

HAMLET.

Whole lungs are tickled with the *tere*.

That is: 'The mirth of the fool, or clown, is so powerful, that it will raise laughter in those whose age and gravity are unused to it.' What Falstaff says to the Chief Justice is something similar: 'Your lordship has somewhat of the saltiness of age about you.' The *tere* and the *yellow leaf* are words expressive of decay.

ROSENCRANDS.

The inhibition comes by means of the late *innovation*.

But what *innovation*? The author did not mean, that the theatre was shut, by an order from above, on account of particular scandal being given by the established

blished players. Mr. Malone has proved, that the intention of the act referred to, was quite opposite to the interpretation given it by the commentators. The *innovation* seems to be, the unexpected encouragement given to the singing-boys of the queen's chapel and St. Paul's, by which the regular comedians were reduced to the necessity of visiting the provinces. They were therefore obliged to inhibit themselves in the metropolis, from the want of customers.

I D E M.

Cry out upon the top of the question.

These children, instead of representing the several characters allotted them with propriety, assumed a turgid style in speaking; for true feeling, and real passion, they substituted strut and noise. In plain terms, they tore a passion to rags.

H A M L E T.

What ! are they children ?

VOL. III.

E

Hey-

Heywood, in his Apology for Actors, complains, that the poets of his time employed children to vent their malicious scandal, and utter abuse against private characters. He insisted, at the same time, that the established theatres never encouraged such infamous practices.

ROSENCRANUS.

Hercules and his load too.

I understand, by this, that the children-actors did not only get the better of all the other established companies, but also of the comedians of the Globe, on the Bank-side, which was esteemed the most perfect of any. The figure of Hercules supporting a globe was fixed on the outside of the playhouse.

HAMLET.

I am but mad north-west; but, when the wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a *band-saw*.

Han-

Hanmer has, I think very properly, altered the word *handsaw*, to *hernshaw*, notwithstanding Dr. Warburton's observation, that the poet found the proverb thus corrupted in the mouths of the people. But will a prince, or a well-bred man, adopt the vulgarisms of the mob? Will a Westminster scholar say, for, The little *Sanctuary*, The little *Sentry*, because he hears it so pronounced every day? Will a gentleman say, the *Pee-aches* in *Common Garden*, instead of the *Piazza* in *Covent Garden*, because the market-people use that corruption?

P O L O N I U S.

Scene undividable and poem unlimited.

One drama which is confined to place, and another unlimited by rules.

H A M L E T.

What? my young lady and mistress! I wish your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the ring.

Hamlet addresses himself to the young lady who acted the female character. Before the Restoration, women's parts, says Cibber, were acted by boys, and men with effeminate countenances. Hart and Mohun were apprentices to Robinson and another eminent comedian, and acted female characters. The voices of girls do not alter like those of boys, which generally, at a certain age, become rough and manly. However, the *liberal* language of Shakspeare, to use a phrase of his own, is well explained, by authorities adduced from Ben Jonson, by Mr. Steevens.

I D E M.

The altitude of a *chioppine*.

High-heeled shoes were formerly worn by women of rank. Tom Coriat, in his *Crudities*, mentions some that were of such a height, that it was scarcely possible to walk with them. He tells a story of a Venetian lady, who exposed herself to
laugh-

laughter by tumbling down, on account of her *chioppines* being made so very exalted.

The old English word, for high-heeled shoes, was *moils*, which Dr. Skinner thus defines: *Calcei altioribus soleis suppositi, olim regibus et magnatibus usitati.*

The word *chioppine* means also a Scotch measure, for liquor, which answers to an English quart.

I D E M.

See the players well bestowed. They are the abstract and brief chronicles of the times.

The encouragement which the players met with from the people, who forsook the churches to crowd the theatres, brought on them the resentment and censure of the clergy of our own church as well as of the puritans. Their lives were examined with an inquisitorial acrimony, and their actions grossly misrepresented. Our author, in common with his brethren, felt and resent-

ed the unjust attack ; he has therefore devoted this part of his play to a vindication of the stage.

I D E M.

After your death you had better have a bad epitaph, than their ill report while you live.

A sarcastic epitaph is not felt by the dead ; but a bad or ridiculous character of the living, by men so universally known, and so generally welcome, as the comedians, may be followed with some inconvenience.

Of all the commentators upon our author, Dr. Johnson seems to keep most clear of illiberal reproaches on the player-editors. He does not charge them, like others, with gross ignorance and incapacity. Theobald, Warburton, and another critic, have, on this subject, sometimes indulged an asperity of phrase not very becoming the style of gentlemen.

I shall here, in honour of the profession of players, subjoin a passage I lately read,

in

in an oration of Demosthenes, against Æschines, *De Falsa Legatione*, and which reflects great credit upon Satyrus, a very eminent comic actor of Athens. This man was the friend and instructor of Demosthenes; and, at the same time, remarkable for mimicking his defects, which tended, as much, perhaps, as any thing, to render him an accomplished orator. I am persuaded the reader will excuse my introducing it in this place, especially as the learned Dr. Leland has not translated that oration, which Ascham terms a school of instruction in itself.

‘ When Philip of Macedon had taken the city of Olynthus, he celebrated the Olympic games. He invited to the festival all the professors of the polite arts. He entertained them with the choicest banquets, and bestowed crowns upon the victors. During the height of the festival, he asked Satyrus, the comedian, why, of all his guests, he alone had asked for no gift, nor had desired any mark of his favour?

Did he suppose him to be of a mean and fordid disposition ? or did he conceive that he had entertained any ill will towards him ?

Satyrus modestly replied, that he stood in no need of those acts of munificence which others demanded. What he should request of the king could with the greatest facility be granted ; but he had some fears lest his petition should be rejected. Philip encouraged him to urge his demand ; and, with a facetious gaiety, assured him, that he would refuse him nothing he should ask.

Satyrus then informed the king, that his old acquaintance and host, Apollopbanes of Pydna, having been slain through treachery, his relations, terrified at the accident, had, for safety, conveyed his two young daughters to Olynthus ; but, as that city had now become subjugated to his majesty's arms, they were in the condition of prisoners and captives. Now the sole boon I shall beg of you, continued the player,

player, is, that you would give orders for their deliverance into my hands; not for the sake of gaining any advantage to myself, but that I may bestow on them portions equal to their birth and education, and prevent their falling into any hardships or disgrace unworthy of me or their father.

‘The whole assembly, upon hearing this generous request of Satyrus, broke out into loud and tumultuous applause; and Philip, with a good grace, immediately complied with his wishes.’

H A M L E T.

All his visage *warm'd*.

Instead of *warm'd*, Dr. Warburton would substitute *wann'd*. The context may possibly afford some ground for that alteration; but I cannot agree with Mr. Steevens, that the actor never turns pale in representing extreme agony and distress of mind. In some very affecting scenes, Garrick and Mrs. Cibber have worked themselves up to the

the shedding of tears, especially in the parts of Lear and Cordelia. Mrs. Siddons, very lately, in the third act of the Fair Penitent, was so far affected, with assuming the mingled passions of pride, fear, anger, and conscious guilt, that I might appeal to the spectators, whether, in spite of the rouge which the actress is obliged to put on, some paleness did not shew itself in her countenance. I think, too, that Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Yates, Mrs. Crawford, and Miss Younge, have given the same proof of consummate feeling in scenes of a similar nature.

The history of the French theatre records something still more difficult in the art of acting: of an actor's turning pale and red in the uttering of a single line. When Baron, after a secession of almost thirty years, returned to the stage, he chose, on his first re-appearance, the part of Cinna, in the tragedy of that name. His manner was so different from what they had been long used to, from the vicious habits of the reigning actors, that he was at first coldly received,
till

till he repeated the following lines, in which he drew a lively portrait of the Conspirators in that tragedy :

Vous eussiez vu leurs yeux s'enflammer de fureur ;
Et dans le même instant, par un effet contraire,
Leurs fronts *palir* d'horreur et *rougir* de colere.

My author* says, that, when he pronounced the last line, Baron's paleness of countenance was visible, and was rapidly succeeded by a flush of red. This convinced the spectators, that this great actor entered, by a kind of magic force, into the spirit of the character.

The following account of Betterton's amazing feeling will furnish a proof, that, when the player is truly impressed with his character, he will, in the representation of fear and terror, assume a pallid hue, as well as the contrary complexion from different emotions :

‘ I have

* Anecdotes Dramatiques.

'I have lately been told, by a gentleman who has frequently seen Betterton perform Hamlet, that he observed his countenance, which was naturally ruddy and fanguine, in the scene of the third act where his father's ghost appears, through the violent and sudden emotion of amazement and horror, turn, instantly, on the sight of his father's spirit, as pale as his neckcloth; when his whole body seemed to be affected with a tremor inexpressible; so that, had his father's ghost actually risen before him, he could not have been seized with more real agonies. And this was felt so strongly by the audience, that the blood seemed to shudder in their veins likewise; and they, in some measure, partook of the astonishment and horror with which they saw this excellent actor affected.*

I D E M.

* Laureat, p. 31.

Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect!

‘Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect,’ imply grief and distress in the utmost degree; consequently the face is not *warmed*, or reddened, with rage or resentment, such as I have seen in honest Ryan’s countenance, when agitated with a supposed view of Duncan’s body, in Macbeth.

H A M L E T.

What’s Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba?

Mr. Upton and Sir John Hawkins have, in reference to this line, quoted the story of the Pherean Tyrant, who quitted the theatre with tears, on seeing the distress of Hecuba in the tragedy of the Troades. To this story Mr. Pope alludes in his prologue to Cato:

Tyrants no more their savage natures kept,
And, foes to virtue, wonder’d how they wept.

Upon

Upon a line in this speech of Hamlet, Mr. Steevens observes, that there must have been, in the time of Shakspeare, several very excellent tragedians, or he would not have formed characters such as Hamlet, Lear, &c. which he had no prospect of seeing represented with force and propriety. Mr. Steevens may know that the principal tragic parts of Shakspeare were acted chiefly by Burbage and Taylor. Allen, the other great actor, is not in the lists of Shakspeare's, Ben Jonson's, and Beaumont and Fletcher's, plays.

I D E M.

Remorseless, *treacherous*, *letcherous*, kindless, villain!

Besides the jingle of *letcherous* and *treacherous*, the first is become almost obsolete, and, in compliance with modern manners, should be omitted, or exchanged for a word less offensive.

I D E M.

I D E M.

————— I have heard,
That guilty creatures, sitting at a play,
Have, by the very cunning of the scene,
Been struck so to the soul, that presently
They have proclaim'd their malefactions.

The author alludes to a known story, that was recent in the memory of those who were the first spectators of this tragedy; and is recorded by T. Heywood, in his *Apology for Actors*, published in 1612. 'The comedians belonging to the Earl of Suffex, acted a play called *Frier Francis*, at *Lynn Regis*, in *Norfolk*, in which the story of a woman was represented, who, to enjoy, unmolested, the company of a young fellow, had murdered her husband: she is brought on the stage as haunted by his ghost.—During the exhibiton of this play, a woman, who was an inhabitant of *Lynn*, was so struck with what she saw upon the stage, that she shrieked, and cried out, *Oh! my husband! my husband!* Upon the people's

ple's enquiring the reason of this exclamation, she confessed, that, several years before that time, to secure the love of a certain gentleman, she had poisoned her husband, whose fearful image seemed to appear before her in the shape of the ghost in the play. The woman was afterwards tried, and condemned for the fact.' For the truth of this story, Heywood refers his readers to the records of Lynn and many living witnesses.

A more recent effect of stage-representation, to rouse a sense of guilt in the mind of a spectator, has been told me with such proofs of authenticity that I cannot disbelieve it.

Dr. Barrowby was, many years since, sent for to attend a young lad who was an apprentice to a tradesman in the city: he found him extremely indisposed and low-spirited. After some questions asked him by the doctor, the boy said, his distemper was owing to his having lately seen the tragedy of George Barnwell. His case, he said,

said, resembled Barnwell's, so far as the robbing of his master; and this, he said, lay very heavy upon his mind.

I D E M.

I'll *tent* him to the quick.

Dr. Johnson interprets *tent* to be the searching his conscience, as *tents* are applied to probe wounds. This meaning I shall not contradict. But *to tent* is a north-country phrase, which signifies, *to look to, to attend to*. Ray, from Cheshire Dialogues, gives this proverb: I'll *tent* thee, quoth Wood: that is, I'll *watch thee narrowly*. And perhaps this meaning may be farther confirmed by what Hamlet afterwards says to Horatio, in the next act:

For I my eyes will rivet fast to his.

To take tent is a Scotch phrase, at this day, for advising a person to be *attentive* to a particular business.

I D E M.

— The play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King.

That the representation of murder, before the murderer, will not always produce the desired effect, we have a remarkable instance in the story of Derby and Fisher :

They were two gentlemen very intimately acquainted. The latter was a dependent on the former, who generously supplied him with the means of living as became a man of birth and education. But no benefits are sufficient to bind the base and the ungrateful : after parting, one evening, with Mr. Derby, at his chambers in the Temple, with all the usual marks of friendship, Fisher contrived to get into his apartments, with an intent to rob and murder his friend. This he unhappily accomplished. For some time, no suspicion fell on the murderer ; he appeared, as usual, in all public places. He

was

was in a side-box at the play of Hamlet; and, when Wilks uttered that part of the soliloquy, which spoke of 'guilty creatures sitting at a play,' a lady turned about, and, looking at him, said, 'I wish the villain who murdered Mr. Derby were here!' The lady and Fisher were strangers to each other. It was afterwards known, that this was the man who had killed his friend. The persons present in the box declared, that neither the speech from the actor, nor the exclamation from the lady, made the least external impression on the murderer. Fisher soon after escaped to Rome, where he professed himself a Roman Catholic, and gained an asylum. About five and twenty years since, my friend, Mr. Richard Wilson, the landscape-painter, saw Fisher at Rome, and spoke to him. He was then, I think, one of the cognoscenti, and a picture-dealer.*

F 2

Since

* Mr. Derby was son of the secondary in the prothonotary's office.

Since the first acting of this tragedy, the commentators are agreed that the author made many additions to it ; more especially, it is thought, respecting the players, whose cause was his own, and which he espoused upon the general topic of defence, that it was not only not *malum in se*, but really beneficial to society, and particularly in the detection of enormous crimes.——

Hamlet, we see, puts his salvation upon the trial of his uncle's guilt in the representation of a play ; he places more confidence in the success of this plot than in a vision that had assumed the form of his *noble father*. But this was not all : a quarrel had arisen between Ben Jonson and the players ; the real cause is almost unknown ; but it is certain, that three or four of his pieces, which Ben wrote after his *Every Man out of his Humour*, were acted by children. One of them, called the *Poetaster*, was an outrageous satire upon Decker and several of the actors. I have said so much upon this subject, in a
review

review of Jonson's pieces, that I shall not here take up much of the reader's time.—Shakspeare, we see, has discussed the argument relative to the encouragement of the children preferably to the established comedians, with great judgment and temper. And I think I can perceive some lesson of caution, given to Jonson and others, on account of their affected contempt of the players : ' You had better have a bad epitaph after your death, than their ill report while you live,' seems to be of this kind. This rupture between Jonson and the players, lasted, I believe, from 1599, till the death of Queen Elizabeth, in 1603. It is not impossible but that King James, who loved and patronised theatrical diversions, by the personal encouragement he gave to Shakspeare, might be the means of reconciling the contending parties. We know that Shakspeare assisted Jonson in writing his *Sejanus* ; and Dr. Johnson and Dr. Farmer are of opinion, that Ben wrote part of the prologue and epilogue to *Henry VIII.* The ill fate of *Sejanus*, at the

Globe, did not deter Jonson from giving the same players his *Fox* and *Alchemist*. But so capricious was his temper, that, notwithstanding the deserved success of these comedies, he employed children to act his *Silent Woman*, a piece utterly unfit, I should think, to be represented by any but actors of the most established merit.

In the speaking of this impassioned soliloquy, Wilks had an ample field to display the warmth of his disposition. The actor's genuine temper sometimes combines itself so strongly with the feelings appropriated to the character, that the scene receives additional advantage from it. The various passions of the speech he felt with energy, and expressed with vehemence; to give force to sentiment, this player would sometimes strike the syllables with too much ardour, and, in the judicious ear, create something like dissonance rather than harmony; but this was not frequent with him.

In this situation of *Hamlet*, Barry was pleasingly animated. But here it must be owned,

owned, that Garrick rose superior to all competition: his self-expostulations, and upbraidings of cowardice and pusillanimity, were strongly pointed, and blended with marks of contemptuous indignation; the description of his uncle, held up at once a portrait of horror and derision. When he closed his strong paintings with the epithet, *kindless* villain! a tear of anguish gave a most pathetic softness to the whole passionate ebullition. One strong feature of Hamlet's character is filial piety: this Garrick preserved through the part. By restoring a few lines, which preceding Hamlets had omitted, he gave a vigour, as well as connection, to the various members of the soliloquy. It is impossible to forget the more than common attention of the audience, which his action and change of voice commanded, when he pronounced—

————— I have heard,
That guilty creatures, sitting at a play——
and the following lines to the end of the
act,

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Treachery of Guildenstern and Rosencraus.—

Soliloquy of To be or not to be.—*Resemblance of part of it to the sentiments of Socrates, in his Apology to the Areopagus.*—

Greek quotation.—*Latin version.*—*Young's Revenge.*—*Whips and scorns of time.*—

Mr. Steevens.—*Quietus.*—*Bodkin explained.*—*Wilks.*—*His utterance of To be or not to be.*—*His greatest error in deportment.*—*Garrick's expression—and action.*—

Assumed madness to Ophelia, by Garrick, Barry, Sheridan, Henderson.—

Advice to the players.—*Perriwig-pated fellows.*—*Madame Couvreur.*—*La Clairon, Le Kin.*—

Full-bottom wigs ; ---worn till 1720. --- Addison, Congreve, Wilks, Booth, and Cibber.—

Macbeth new-dressed by Macklin.—*Ancient and modern pantomimes.*—

Augustus, and Pylades the mime.—

Age and body of the time.—*Tarleton and*

Kempe.

Kempe.—Hippisley, Shuter, King.—Pinkethman and Wilks.—Odd agreement.—Anecdote of Pinkethman.—Henderson's excellence.—Horatio and Pylades.—Chorus.—Dr. Hurd—Mrs. Montague and Mr. Colman.—Ridiculous practice of stage-murders.—Garrick's unvaried action.—Forest of feathers and a cry of players.—Paddock and peacock.—Duty too bold explained.—Fear personified.—The King's soliloquy.—Keen, Quin.—Hulet.—How his audit stands.—Hamlet's vindictive temper.—Voltaire's rat trapped :—As kill a king.—None wed the second but who kill'd the first.—Queen charged with murder.—Takes off the rose, &c. explained differently from Mr. Steevens.—The nature of motion.—Several passages attempted to be explained.—Two pictures in little.—Stage-trick of the actor at the entrance of the Ghost.—My father, in his habit, as he liv'd.—Unpeg the basket on the housetop, explained.—Just suspicions, in Hamlet, of his two school-fellows.—Merit of the scene

Scene between Hamlet and his mother.---Taylor, Betterton, Wilks, Milward.---Garrick.---Barry.---Sheridan.---Henderson.---Smith.---Lady Slingsby.---Mrs. Porter, Mrs. Hallam, Mrs. Pritchard.

ACT III. Scene I.

The King, Queen, &c.

G U I L D E N S T E R N.

But with a crafty madness keeps aloof,
When we would bring him to some confession
Of his true state.

THIS speech of Guildenstern contains a full confirmation of the baseness and treachery of these school-fellows of Hamlet, who betray him, as far as lies in their power, to the King. In their commerce with the Prince, they seem to have nothing in view, but at his expence, with the loss of their own honour, to gain *such thanks as fits a king's remembrance.*

H A M-

H A M L E T.

To be or not to be.

This celebrated soliloquy will be admired, got by rote, and constantly repeated, by all persons of taste, as long as the existence of our language.

Some lines of this speech bear such a strong resemblance to an argument, relating to the future existence of the soul, in Plato's Apology of Socrates before the Areopagus, that, if that part of the great Philosopher's works had been translated into English in our author's life-time, I should have imagined he had thence borrowed several sentiments in the soliloquy. But, in Mr. Malone's accurate list of ancient authors translated into English in the reigns of Elizabeth and James, the Dialogue of Axiochus is the only part of Plato then published in English.

The passage, in this author, I refer to, is in the 32d section of the Apologia, as follows in the Greek. Foster's edit. Ox. 1765.

Δυσὸν γὰρ θάτερον ἐστὶ τὸ τεθναίνει· ἡ γὰρ
 οἶον μὴδὲν εἶναι, μὴδ' αἰσθῆσιν μὴδεμίαν μὴδεὸς
 εἶναι τὸν τεθνεῶτα, ἢ κατὰ τὰ λεγόμενα μετα-
 βολὴ τις τυγχάνει ὅσα καὶ μετοικησὶς τῆς ψυχῆς
 τὰ τόπων τὰ ἐνθενδε εἰς ἄλλον τόπον· καὶ εἴτε δὴ
 μὴδεμία αἰσθῆσις ἐστίν, ἀλλ' οἶον ὑπνῶ, ἐπειδὴ
 τὶς καθευδὼν μὴδ' ὄναρ μὴδὲν ὄρα, θαυμασιὸν κερ-
 δὲ ἂν εἴη ὁ θάνατος.

Mors enim *necesse est* fit alterum de duo-
 bus: ut aut in nihilum redeat, et omnes
 omnino sensus amittat mortuus; aut,
 quemadmodum dicitur, in alium quendam
 locum ex his locis morte migretur. Et
 siue sensus extinguitur, morsque ei somno
 similis est qui nonnunquam sine visis som-
 niorum placatissimam quietem affert, im-
 mensum sane lucrum est emori.

The θαυμασιὸν κερδὸς of the original seems
 to answer fully to our author's *consum-
 mation devoutly to be wished for*. The rest
 of the section, though admirable, is different
 in argument from the remaining part of the
 soliloquy. But Dr. Young has, in his
Revenge, taken advantage of a noble senti-
 ment

ment of Socrates, who pleases himself with the idea of meeting, in the other world, the shades of Minos, Rhadamanthus, Æacus, Triptolemus, &c.—So Alonzo, in the fourth act of the Revenge,

Death joins us to the great majority !

'Tis to be born to Platos and to Cæsars :

'Tis to be great for ever !

H A M L E T.

For who would bear the whips and scorns of time ?

Notwithstanding all the learned commentators have said on these words, it seems to me very obvious, that, without any particular allusion to his own age, the author meant a general sentiment concerning such common wrongs and afflictions to which life, and especially long life, is ever exposed.

Mr. Steevens, in addition to his large note on this quotation, assures us, that there was more illiberal private abuse, and peevish satire, published in the reigns of
Queen

Queen Elizabeth and King James I. than in any other age, except the present.

This is not very clear to me : but happy is the man, who can, with a good conscience, affirm, he never was guilty of the base practice of wounding the fair reputation of others, or of disturbing the peace of families by malicious and rancorous slander. The propagation of obloquy, to gain wealth and preferment, may admit of some exculpation ; but, of all abuse, that which is spontaneous and unprovoked is the most unaccountable.—

What does Mr. Steevens think of a gentleman, who, when at his country-seat, found no amusement so pleasing as writing libels upon his neighbours, and throwing them over their garden-walls, with the malevolent design of tormenting those who had never offended him ?

I D E M.

— Himself might his *quietus* make
With a bare *bodkin*.

The

The word *quietus* is well explained, from good authority, by Mr. Steevens.— But to instance a *Roman dagger* for a *bodkin*, when the author most certainly means the smallest instrument of destruction that can be used, is surely a very great misapplication of criticism. Skinner explains *bodkin* to be *crinium incerniculum, seu discerniculum*; *acus crinalis*, a hair pin or a needle, which, if properly applied, would dispatch a man as soon as a dagger or a sword. All the authorities, produced in this place to authenticate the application of the word *bodkin* as synonymous to *dagger*, or *stiletto*, serve only to mislead the reader.

Wilks spoke this soliloquy with a pleasing melancholy of countenance, and grave despondency of action. He was less skilful in the utterance of sentiment than passion. His greatest fault, in deportment, proceeded from his aptness to move or shift his ground too frequently. It was said of him, by a sourcer itic, that he could never stand still.--

This

This fault he never could entirely free himself from, though often put in mind of it.

Barry, not having middle tones in his voice, could not give the requisite grave energy to sentiment; he was therefore obliged, in some situations of character, to raise his powers of speech above their ordinary tone. Garrick, by an expressive countenance and flexible voice, gave full force to the profound reflections of this meditation on futurity, which he pursued, through all their progress, with exquisite judgment and address.

I D E M.

————— Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remember'd.

This, says Dr. Johnson, is a touch of nature; for Hamlet, on the sight of Ophelia, does not recollect himself; he forgets that he was to personate the madman.--- It is very true; for it was not possible that

that he could, after such solemn sentiments, assume immediately a personated character. He does not affect insanity, it should be observed; till Ophelia offers to return his love-presents. This awakens him into a sense of his situation; as, from that circumstance, he must conclude, that her behaviour to him was regulated by her father, and perhaps with the King's concurrence.

I D E M.

Virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock, but we shall relish of it.

‘Notwithstanding all our endeavours to the contrary, the sin of our first parents will be predominant.’

I D E M.

To a nunnery go.

The assumed madness with Ophelia was, by Garrick, in my opinion, made too
 VOL. III. G boiste.

boisterous. He should have remembered, that he was reasoning with a young lady, to whom he had professed the tenderness of passion. Wilks retained enough of disguised madness ; but, at the same time, preserved the feelings of a lover and the delicacy of the gentleman. Barry was not so violent as Garrick, and was consequently nearer to the intention of the author. Sheridan, Smith, and Henderson, have all, in this scene, avoided a manner too outrageous.

Scene II.

Hamlet and the Players.

H A M L E T.

Speak the speech, &c.

I have always considered the advice of Hamlet to the Players as Shakspeare's legacy of love to his fellows, the comedians. Such he called them in his life-time, and such he termed some of them in his will. Wilks, I believe, never spoke it ; and I conjecture

jecture it was omitted, from the death of Betterton, till the good taste of Garrick revived it. The rules were such as became the mouth of a consummate master in his profession.

I D E M.

Oh ! it offends me to the soul, to hear a robustious *perruwig-pated* fellow tear a passion to tatters.

Long is the period before taste and judgment can prevail over established custom, be it ever so erroneous.

The first French actress, who introduced a remarkable change in the female theatrical habit,* was Madame Couvreur. * To the body of the robe she added a long and majestic train, more conformable to the antique. But the heroes of antiquity, on the French stage, were as absurdly habited as the heroines. Scipio, Cæsar, and Brutus, wore indeed the ancient cuirass and buskins ; but their heads were covered with French hats, and adorned with large plumes of feathers. La Clairon and Le

G 2

Kin,

* This celebrated actress, the generous mistress of Count Sax, died in 1730.

Kin, from a love to the art, which they cultivated with a superior taste, have entirely altered the old mode of dressing, and rendered it more conformable to the *costume*.

The heads of the English actors were, for a long time, covered with large full-bottomed perriwigs, a fashion introduced in the reign of Charles II. which was not entirely disused in public till about the year 1720. Addison, Congreve, and Steele, met at Button's coffee-house, in large, flowing, flaxen, wigs; Booth, Wilks, and Cibber, when full-dressed, wore the same. Till within these twenty-five years, our Tamerlanes and Catos had as much hair on their heads as our judges on the bench.——Booth was a classical scholar, and well acquainted with the polite arts; he was conversant with the remains of antiquity, with busts, coins, &c. nor could he approve such a violation of propriety; but his indolence got the better of his

his good taste, and he became a conformist to a custom which he despised. I have been told, that he and Wilks bestowed forty guineas each on the exorbitant thatching of their heads. We have, at length, emancipated ourselves from the usual mode of ornamenting our heroes, and are coming nearer to truth and nature. The tragedy of Macbeth would have been still dressed in modern habits, if the good taste of Mr. Macklin had not introduced the old Highland military habit. Is it not an absolute contradiction to common sense, that the play of Hamlet should in dress be modernized, and the King of Denmark wear an order which was instituted several hundred years after the action of the tragedy? It is but within these twenty years, that the plays of Richard III, and Henry VIII. were distinguished by the two principal characters being dressed with propriety, though differently from all the rest. Falstaff was, till very lately, an unique in dress as well as character.

I D E M.

Inexplicable dumb shows and noise.

Those dumb representations, as they are well explained, from authority, by Mr. Steevens, did not resemble either ancient or modern pantomimes. The ancient mimes were so expert at the representation of thought by action, that, in process of time, they became greater favourites with the people of Rome, than the comedians themselves. Some of them had the art to represent the action of an entire play, such as the *Hercules furens*, to the delight and astonishment of the spectators. So great a darling of the Romans was *Py-lades*, in representing characters by dancing with emotion, that, it is said, *Augustus* reconciled the people to many disagreeable imposts, by recalling him from banishment; a penalty he had incurred by pointing to a spectator, with his finger, who had displeased him.

I D E M.

I D E M.

—— The very age and body of the time
his form and preffure.

From acting, Hamlet is insensibly drawn into a partial description of dramatic fable. I think, with submission to Dr. Johnson and Mr. Steevens, that 'the age and body of the time' means the particular vices and follies of the age we live in; to correct these is the business of the dramatic poet. In Aristophanes, and other ancient dramatists, the moral and political history of their times might have been partly traced. In Shakspeare, Ben Jonson, Fletcher, and Massinger, well understood, we might find actions pourtrayed of the age in which *they* lived.

I D E M.

And let those that play your Clowns, speak no more than is set down for them.

Tarleton and Kempe, who were excellent comic actors in our author's days, and

G 4

generally

generally personated the Fool, or Clown, were men of ready wit and flowing humour. They stood in need of a curb to the wild sallies of their exuberant fancy, which Shakspeare here presents them.

It must be confessed, that the actors, termed low comedians, are too guilty of adding to their author's text. Sometimes, indeed, it happens, that the wit, or happy imagination of the actor, is of service to the situation in which he is placed, and unexpectedly gives a relief or embellishment to that which would otherwise be neglected, or perhaps disapproved.

The contrary practice is, however, much more common. Hippisley not seldom in this point offended, Shuter oftener, King rarely, Jonson and Weston scarcely ever; but Will. Pinkethman, of merry memory, was in such full possession of the galleries, that he would hold discourse with them for several minutes. To
fine

fine him for this fault was in vain; he could not abandon it, and the managers were too generous to curtail him of his income. At length, I was told, he and Wilks came to this whimsical agreement: Pinkey consented, that whenever he was guilty of corresponding with the gods, he should receive, on his back, three smart strokes of Bob Wilks's cane.—This fine, however, was, I believe, never exacted. I shall give the reader one specimen of his unseasonable drollery.

In the play of the Recruiting Officer, Wilks was the Captain Plume, and Pinkethman one of the Recruits. The Captain, when he enlisted him, asked his name: instead of answering as he ought, Pinkey replied, 'Why! don't you know my name, Bob? I thought every fool had known that!' Wilks, in rage, whispered to him the name of the Recruit, Thomas Appletree. The other retorted aloud, 'Thomas Appletree! Thomas Devil! my
name

name is Will. Pinkethman :’ and, immediately addressing an inhabitant of the upper regions, he said, ‘ Hark you, friend : don’t you know my name ?’ — ‘ Yes, Master Pinkey (said a respondent) we know it very well.’ The play-house was now in an uproar ; the audience, at first, enjoyed the petulant folly of Pinkethman and the distress of Wilks ; but, in the progress of the joke, it grew tiresome, and Pinkey met with his deserts, a very severe reprimand in a hiss ; and this mark of displeasure he changed into applause, by crying out, with a countenance as melancholy as he could make it, in a loud and nasal twang, *Odsso ! I fear I am wrong !*

To the honour of the present race of comic actors, it must be said, that they seldom indulge themselves in adding their own to the author’s sense. Men of abilities they generally are ; and, as such, often suggest fallies of pleasantry, and situations of humour to the authors behind the curtain, and not seldom contribute to the
mirth

mirth and gaiety of the scene by their ingenuity.

In giving instructions to his own society, there is some delicacy required in the behaviour of the actor, who, in the person of a Prince, takes upon him to censure and reform their errors. Mr. Garrick delivered these theatrical precepts with much force and propriety; but he did not accompany them with the condescending quality expected from the high-bred man of rank. He rather sustained the office of a stage-manager, and consummate master of the art, than that of the generous friend, and princely monitor. Mr. Henderson has, in this scene, less of the pedagogue and more of the gentleman.

I D E M.

Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man
As e'er my conversation met withal.

The

The warm and pathetic address of Hamlet to his friend, is, I think, not unlike that of Orestes to Pylades in the *Electra* of Euripides :

Πυλαδη, σε γε δη πρωτον ανθρωπων εγω
Πιστον νομιζω και φιλον ξενον εμοι, κ. τ. λ.

Thee, Oh my Pylades, I deem the first
Of men for thy fidelity and friendship,
And my unsever'd comrade !

Wodhull's Translation.

H A M L E T.

I must be idle,

‘ If I am observed to converse with you seriously, my plot will be disconcerted; I must therefore re-assume madness.’

R O S E N C R A U S.

They (the players) stay upon your patience.

‘ Submissively, or on sufferance, they attend your commands.’

H A M-

H A M L E T.

Be not you ashamed to shew, and they will tell you what it means.

Mr. Steevens reproves the author, for putting into the mouth of Hamlet unbecoming expressions during his personated madness. But it has been noticed, by those who have visited the cells of lunatics, that females, the most remarkable for modesty, have, in their insanity, thrown out very indecent and unbecoming expressions. In her madness, the innocent Ophelia chants scraps of such songs as would not have entered into her mind when in her perfect senses.

O P H E L I A.

You are as good as a *chorus*, my lord.

Shakspeare knew little of the ancient *chorus*. What he so terms of his own, is always in the shape of a prologue. The learned B. Jonson has, in his Cataline, introduced

troduced the Ghost of Sylla in a rhiming kind of exordium or prologue; to which he has added four odes, to be sung between the acts, as *chorus*, in various unequal measure.

Milton, in his *chorus* to Samson Agonistes, is the genuine imitator of Æschylus and Sophocles. Mr. Mason has, by his enchanting poetry, in his musical odes to Elfrida and Caractacus, almost surprised the public into a taste for that part of the ancient tragedy.

Though it does not become me to determine which of the two champions, for and against the *chorus*, the learned Dr. Hurd and Mrs. Montague, is in the right; yet I cannot help leaning to the opinion of Mr. Colman, who, in his notes to his happy translation of Horace's Art of Poetry, observes, — ‘That if a *chorus* be really necessary, our dramas, like those of the ancients, should be rendered wholly musical. The dances also will then claim
their

their place, and the pretensions of Vestris and Noverre must be admitted as classical. Such a spectacle, if not more natural than the modern, would at least be consistent; but to introduce a groupe of spectatorial actors, some speaking in one part of the drama and singing in another, is as strange and incoherent a medley, and full as unclassical, as the dialogue and airs in the Beggar's Opera.'

H A M L E T.

Begin, murderer; leave thy damnable faces, and begin.

This contains a censure upon the custom of certain actors, who were cast into the parts of conspirators, traitors, and murderers, who used to disguise themselves in large black wigs, and distort their features, in order to appear terrible; in short, to discover that which their art should teach them to conceal. I have seen Hippisley act the first murderer in Macbeth: his face was made pale with chalk, distinguished with large whiskers, and a long

long black wig.* This custom, of dressing so preposterously the hateful implements of the tragic scene, is now almost worn out.

I D E M.

I could interpret between you and your lover, if I could see the puppet dallying.

That is, 'I could act the part of master of the puppet-show, and interpret both for you and your lover, if I saw the least prelude of amorous inclination.'

I D E M.

For some must laugh, while some must weep;
Thus runs the world away.

In the uttering of this line and a half, it was Garrick's constant practice to pull out a white handkerchief, and, walking about the stage, to twirl it round with vehemence. This action can incur no just censure, except from its constant repetition. He, of all the players I ever knew, gave

* Mr. Addison, in the *Tatler*, very happily ridicules this practice. In the inventory of a play-house, he enumerates a murderer's whiskers in a band-box.

gave the greatest variety to action and deportment; nor could I help wondering, that so great an artist should, in this instance, tie himself down to one particular mode, when his situation would admit of so many. The conforming to an uniform method of action makes the whole appear a lesson got by rote rather than the effort of genuine feeling.

I D E M.

Would not this, Sir, and a *forest of feathers*, get me a fellowship in a *cry of players*?

H O R A T I O.

Half.

H A M L E T.

——— A whole one.

The *forest of feathers* alludes to large plumes of feathers which the old actors wore on their heads in characters of heroism and dignity. This practice was adopted at the Restoration, and continued in force till Mr. Garrick's æra of management. His superior taste got rid of the incumbrance.

Cry of players is, as Mr. Steevens observes, a *company of comedians*. The old actors divided their profits into equal or unequal shares, according to their several degrees of merit. Sometimes, indeed, a very indifferent performer, by his talents as a writer, gained an equal, if not a superior, portion of the surplus. It likewise not unfrequently happened, that a man, who had no other desert than furnishing a large part of the wardrobe, the scenes, and other decorations, claimed a considerable part of the treasure. Tucca, in Ben Jonson's *Poetaster*, calls one of the lower actors *Three-Shares*.

This custom of portioning out the income of the theatre into parts, subsisted long amongst the French comedians, and is, I believe, practised to this day. — Downs, in his *Stage-History*, informs us, that the principal actors of the king's theatre, in Drury-lane, Hart, Mohun, &c. on an annual division of their profits, gained sometimes 1000*l.* each.

I D E M.

DO NOT DIE M.

A very, very, *peacock*.

Notwithstanding the very plausible reading of *paddock*, instead of *peacock*, proposed by Mr. Theobald, I cannot help thinking, with Mr. Pope, that Shakspeare alluded to the well-known fable of the birds, who preferred that vain, gaudy, foolish bird, the *peacock*, to the eagle, in their choice of a king. The word *paddock*, afterwards introduced by Hamlet in the scene with his mother, I think proves nothing. To enforce his argument of her guilt, and to display the deformity as well as absurdity of her conduct, he *there* compares his uncle to the most disagreeable and displeasing object in nature.

G U I L D E N S T E R N.

If my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.

This answer to Hamlet's question, of 'Why do you go about to recover the wind of me?' which is not, in my opinion, ludicrous, but objurgative, (for he keeps no measures with his old school-fellows) seems

to include a sort of reproach. 'If, in delivering the messages of the King and Queen, I have shewn too great boldness, my respect to you, in standing out of the way, that you might with more ease receive the flute, will certainly be interpreted ill manners.' And here I am glad to find my opinion partly confirmed by Mr. Tyrrwhit. But the movement of Guildenstern appeared, to Hamlet, as insidious as the conduct of these courtiers in the second act, when one of them, instead of answering a question directly, says to the other, *What say you?* which is as much as to say, 'Shall I speak the truth, or tell a lie?'

K I N G.

For we will fetters put about this *fear*.

Fear is here personified, as in Homer, when it is made the concomitant of other terrible companions of war.

There

There is, in the Maid's Tragedy, a passage, where the unhappy Aspasia gives directions to Antiphila, to weave in needle-work a storm and shipwreck; in which the word *fear* is beautifully personified, and to be understood much in the same sense as in Hamlet:

~~—~~ In this place work a quicksand;
And, over it, a shallow smiling water,
And his ship ploughing it. And then a *fear*:
Do that *fear* to the life, wench.

MAID'S TRAGEDY, ACT II.

K I N G.

Oh! my offence is rank!

The King is just come from the representation of the play; where he has been struck with compunction, from viewing the same act represented on the scene which he had himself committed. His coming on with the two courtiers, and the interruption of Polonius, are awkward incumbrances to his situation, and I think

unnecessary, as the sending Hamlet to England had been determined by the King in a preceding scene, and Polonius had already told his master he would be attentive to what should pass between Hamlet and his mother.

Notwithstanding this admirable soliloquy of the King describes the struggles of conscience without contrition, and a dread of future punishment without remorse or penitence, and which, in my opinion, requires a very judicious speaker, yet the part of the King appears so odious, that the principal actors generally shun it, as the representation of a low and insidious villain, who wants spirit to support his assumed rank with dignity, and maintain his usurpation by courage. Yet there are some situations of Claudius worthy the attention of an actor. His behaviour during the acting of the play before him, and the evident signs of guilt which he ought to shew in his countenance, require a skilful

a skilful exhibition of conscious terror. Whoever is able to do justice to the sentiments of this soliloquy, and paint the horror of guilt resulting from the dread of a future reckoning, will be amply rewarded by his auditors.

Some eminent actors, such as Keen, Quin, and Hulet, have not disdained to represent this character. When Ryan, at Lincoln's-inn-fields theatre, appeared in Hamlet, to give strength to the play, Quin and Walker acted the inferior parts of the King and Horatio, and retained them from 1719 to 1734.

H A M L E T.

And how his audit stands, who knows, save heaven?

Hamlet was now confirmed, (by that proof on which he most relied, the signs of guilt in the King's behaviour at the play) that the vision he had seen was no devil.—Of this he is well satisfied; for he says he will

H 4

Take

Take the Ghost's word for a thousand pounds.

That the author should now make him forget what the Ghost had related to him, of his confinement in purgatory, is a little surprising. The whole soliloquy is more reprehensible, perhaps, than any part of Shakspeare's works. The deferring the punishment of the King at his devotions, lest his soul should go to heaven, is not only shocking, but highly improbable; and is, besides, a poor contrivance to delay the catastrophe till the last act. The first actor who rejected this horrid soliloquy was Mr. Garrick,

I D E M.

How now? a rat! dead for a ducket, dead!

This line has given occasion to an absurd charge of Voltaire against this tragedy.—
 'Hamlet (says this writer) kills the father of his mistress, on supposition that it was a *rat* which he destroyed.' Had he
 read

read the play, or understood the text if he had read it, he would have known, that Hamlet imagined the person he had killed was the King himself. But this is not the only error into which this great man has fallen respecting this play. The assumed madness of Hamlet he calls real: *Hamlet y devient fou dans la seconde acte. The King, Queen, and Hamlet, drink together on the stage. The actors sing together, quarrel, and fight.* It is somewhat surprising, that a man who had been several years in England, and had written letters in our language, could be so grossly mistaken. To suppose him the inventor of these false criminations, would be to degrade genius too much. Mrs. Montague has, by an incomparable defence of our author, defeated the weak attempts of this envious but brilliant Frenchman, to blast the laurels of our great poet.

Q U E E N.

As kill a king?

I cannot,

I cannot, with Mr. Steevens, suppose this interrogation of the Queen as a hint to the auditors that she had no concern in the murder of her husband. The words are absolutely equivocal, and may be a proof of her guilt as well as her innocence. The Ghost had charged her with being won to the lust of his brother and murderer; there he stopped, and, with the most pathetic tenderness, cautions Hamlet not to think of punishing his mother, but to leave her to heaven and her conscience. But there is one passage in the play acted before the King and Queen, which brings the guilt of murder home to Hamlet's mother. The Player-Queen says, among other professions of inviolable constancy, —

In second husband let me be accurst !

None wed the second but who kill'd the first !

These lines we may suppose to be put into the old fable, by Hamlet, on purpose to probe the mind of the Queen; and his

his immediate reflection on her behaviour plainly proves that they stung her to the quick : ‘ That’s wormwood !’

H A M L E T.

————— Takes off the rose
From the fair *forehead* of an innocent love,
And sets a blister there.

I cannot think this passage requires the long and learned note of Mr. Steevens, without which it may very easily be explained.

‘ This infamous act (says Hamlet) deprives the countenance of that modest hue, or rosy blush, which becomes the chaste and virtuous matron ; and it places or fixes there a brand of infamy.’ The *forehead*, in this place, stands, as *frons* does in Latin, for the *countenance*. *Fronti nulla fides*.

[I D E M.

————— Sense sure you have,
Else could you not have motion.

Motion

Motion depends on the will of the person who moves. This is sufficient to justify the old reading; the lowest degree of animal sense is motion, and therefore properly applied to one who is accused of having neither sight nor judgment.

I D E M.

————— Such a deed,
As from the body of contraction plucks
The very foul!

‘A deed which is like separating the soul from the body, and dissolves that contract which religion and law intended to render indissoluble.’

I D E M.

————— Heaven's face doth glow :
Yea, this solidity and compound mass,
With tristful visage, as against the doom,
Is thought sick at the act !

‘A deed

‘ A deed so horrid, that it seemed to fore-run the day of judgment, and earth itself to sympathise and feel a sensibility on the occasion.’ Milton, who was a great admirer of our poet, from these lines might possibly be indebted to Shakespeare for that sublime passage of the earth’s sympathising with Adam and Eve when they ate the forbidden fruit :

Earth felt the wound ; and Nature, from her seat,
Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe
That all was lost !

PARADISE LOST, Book IX.

H A M L E T.

Look upon this picture, and on this.

It has been the constant practice of the stage, ever since the Restoration, for Hamlet, in this scene, to produce from his pocket, two pictures in little, of his father and uncle, not much bigger than two large coins or medallions. How the
graceful

graceful attitude of a man could be given in a miniature, I cannot conceive.—In the infancy of the stage, we know that our theatres had no moving scenes; nor were they acquainted with them till Betterton brought some from Paris, 1662.—In our author's time they made use of tapestry; and the figures in tapestry might be of service to the action of the player in the scene between Hamlet and the Queen. * But (says Downs) Sir William Davenant taught the players the representation of Hamlet as he had seen it before the civil wars.' But, if the scantiness of decorations compelled the old actors to have recourse to miniature-pictures, why should the play-house continue the practice when it is no longer necessary; and when the scene might be shewn to more advantage by two portraits, at length, in different pannels of the Queen's closet? Dr. Armstrong, in his Sketches, long ago pointed out the supposed absurdity of these hand-pictures.

pictures. The other mode, of large portraits, would add to the graceful action of the player, in pointing at the figures in the wainscot. He might resume the chair immediately after he had done with the subject, and go on with the expostulation. However, this is only a conjecture which I throw out for the consideration of the actors.

I D E M.

Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
You heavenly guards !

At the appearance of the Ghost, in this scene, Hamlet immediately rises from his seat affrighted ; at the same time he contrives to kick down his chair, which, by making a sudden noise, it was imagined would contribute to the perturbation and terror of the incident. But this, in my opinion, is a poor stage-trick, and should be avoided ; it tends to make the actor solicitous

licitous about a trifle, when more important matter demands his attention.

G H O S T.

Oh! step between her and her fighting soul.

Here, as in the first act, our author makes the vision overflow with tenderness and sensibility for his unhappy Queen. Shakspeare every where shews a genuine respect for the fair sex throughout all his works. In thirty-five plays, which are all that can honestly be attributed to him, there are not above six or seven vicious characters of women. I have, in the life of Massinger, observed, that he likewise dwells with uncommon pleasure on the perfections of the beautiful part of the creation, and that his numbers flow with surprising harmony whenever they are the subject.

H A M L E T.

My father, in his habit as he liv'd!

A warlike

A warlike king, such as we are told old Hamlet was, would be dressed as often in armour as in any other habit. The Queen must have often seen him in a military garb; therefore there is no need of Mr. Steevens's new pointing of the line.

I D E M.

And, when you are desirous to be blest'd,
I'll blessing beg of you.

That is: 'When I perceive in you the true signs of penitence, I shall then, and not till then, desire your prayers for me.'

I D E M.

Unpeg the basket on the house's top;
Let the birds fly, and, like the famous ape,
To try conclusions, in the basket creep,
And break your neck down.

Mr. Warner's note, referring to the story of the jackanapes and the partridges, in a letter to Sir John Suckling, is by no means

satisfactory. The author seems rather to allude to some well-known story, or fable, of an ape, who, being near a basket, in some tower, or high place, was curious to see what was in it; he contrived to open it; and, on seeing the birds which were in it fly away, to make experiment, whether he could not do the like, he crept into the basket, and, by his weight, tumbled it down, and broke his neck.

But, let the story be as it will, the meaning of the passage seems plainly to be this: 'Be not, mother, induced, by any means, to betray my simulation of madness to my uncle; if you do, he will not only put an end to my life, but from his guilty suspicions, treat you as an accomplice.'

I D E M.

They must sweep my way,
And marshal me to knavery.

• These

‘These men must be the ushers to some vile knavery of my uncle, which will bring on my ruin.’ What is farther said, in this place, of Hamlet’s just suspicions of his school-fellows, is preparative to his conduct as related in the fifth act.

This scene is one of the glories of the English stage; it may challenge a comparison with any thing of the kind produced by *haughty Greece or insolent Rome*.

France, in fifty years after the first acting of this play, could not boast of a composition so highly finished. In the first interview between Hamlet and the Ghost, the terrible graces are superior to the tender; in this, the latter bear away the palm, though it is not absolutely deficient in the former. The argument in favour of the nuptial bond, and against adultery, is conducted with equal force and address. The contrast, between old Hamlet and his brother Claudius, is inimitably touched. — But I shall not dwell upon excellencies

which could not have escaped any observer.

How Taylor, the original Hamlet, performed it, we can have no trace or idea, except from what Downs has given, in his *Roscius Anglicanus*, which amounts to no more than that Betterton acted it wonderfully, from the lessons of Sir William Davenant, who had seen and remembered Taylor. Hamlet was esteemed, it is said by the same writer, the master-piece of Betterton. Downs is justified in this information by the concurrent testimony of his contemporaries, and especially Sir Richard Steele and Colley Cibber. I have seen a pamphlet, written above forty years since, by an intelligent man, who greatly extols the performance of Betterton in this last scene, commonly called the closet-scene.

If Addison and Cibber justly blamed Wilks, for his behaviour to the Ghost in the first act, they could not possibly
censure

censure his conduct with his mother in the third. His action was indeed a happy mixture of warm indignation, tempered with the most affecting tenderness. His whole deportment was princely and graceful: when he presented the pictures, the reproaches his animation produced were guarded with filial reluctance; and, when he came to that pathetic expostulation, of

Mother, for love of grace!

there was something in his manner inexpressibly gentle and powerfully persuasive.

To Wilks, Milward succeeded. All the surviving spectators of Milward's Prince of Denmark will be pleased to have him recalled to their memory; for, in his first interview with the Ghost, and in this closet-scene, he was not only an agreeable, but a skilful actor: his voice was full and musical; and, in this character, he seemed to forget that love of ranting, which was his singular fault; or, as Shakspeare would express it, his *dram of base in acting*. —

Hamlet was the last part poor Milward was announced for in the bills ; on his sudden illness, Theophilus Cibber undertook to read it.

Whatever deficiencies might be observed in Wilks and Milward, they were amply supplied by the genius of Garrick. Here he had an ample field to display that fine expression of countenance, energy of speech, and warmth of passion, for all which he was so justly admired. To argumentative reproof he gave full vigour ; nor was he deficient in those filial regards which a son should feel for a mother unhappily missed. His address to the Ghost was reverentially awful, as well as transcendently moving. His eye, marked with grief and filial love, pursued the melancholy shade to his exit. His recovery from that situation was characteristically striking, and his final exhortation to his mother ardent and pathetic. Except in the delicacy of address to a lady, in which Wilks and Barry excelled all actors, Garrick was, in this scene, a most perfect Hamlet.

Mr.

Mr. Sheridan, in several situations of Hamlet's character, was original, and different from all, of his own time, who had preceded him. The applause conferred on him by many brilliant audiences, will be an authentic testimony of his merit.

Hamlet was not Barry's most happy effort in acting; but, in this scene, he certainly was very pleasing and affecting.

Mr. Smith's endeavours to please, in Hamlet, were crowned with success. He modestly contented himself with following the instructions of his great master, Mr. Garrick; and was always heard with respect and attention.

I have already mentioned Mr. Henderson with that just praise which his great merit deserves. He is accounted by the critics, one of the most correct and judicious speakers on the stage. His third-act scene, in Hamlet, is not only judicious, but pathetic.

The part of Hamlet's mother is a character of dignity, not without a mixture of passion. Though, of late, our principal actresses have rejected Queen Gertrude, yet the skill of a good performer is requisite to fill up many of her theatric situations with propriety. Without a proper support from the Queen, Hamlet's action, in the last scene of the third act, would lose half its force. Lady Slingsby, an actress of merit, was the first Hamlet's mother, I think, since the Restoration, when Mrs. Betterton acted Ophelia. Mrs. Porter was the first Queen-mother of Wilks, and Mrs. Hallam of Ryan.

The excellent performance of this part by Mrs. Pritchard will be the longer remembered, since, as I have observed, the present eminent tragic actresses reject the part, as if it were beneath them. The universal applause she commanded, in this great interview with her son, was thought by her a sufficient compensation for

for going through various attitudes of less consequence.

Mrs. Pritchard's attention to all the less, and seemingly unimportant, business of the Queen, was so exact, that Hamlet's mother was esteemed one of her *primé* characters. Mrs. Porter, though a greater actress in tragedy, did not excel her in Gertrude.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The King is with the body, &c. *explained.*

—*Fontinbras and Hamlet.*—Market of man's time.—*Slight affronts resented.*—*Falkland island.*—*Lucian's Speculantes.*—*Hugger-mugger.*—*Keen's majesty.*—*Case of Ophelia.*—*Mrs. Cibber.*—*Mrs. Betterton.*—*Mrs. Booth and Mrs. Clive.*—*Character of Laertes ;—closeted by the King.*—*The Grave-diggers defended, and Voltaire censured.*—*Reflections on Yorick's skull.*—*Foote.*—*Clod, the famous court-fool—Queen Elizabeth, Archbishop Whitgift, and Dean Perne.*—*Cabe Underhill.*—*His character.*—*Last part.*—*Jonson, the actor ;—originally a painter.*—*Yates.*—*Jemmy Robertson, of York.*—*Hamlet's behaviour to Rosencraus and Guildenstern.*—*Passive obedience.*—*Ostrick characterized.*—*Hamlet a liar.*—*Laertes base.*—*Fat and scant of breath.*—*Hamlet defended against the*
at-

attacks of Mr. Steevens.—Garrick's alteration of Hamlet.—The Grave-diggers restored.—Short character of the play.—Mr. Kemble.---Inferior parts in Hamlet.

A&t IV.

H A M L E T.

The body is with the King, but the King is not with the body.

HAMLET, it should be observed, seizes every opportunity to speak contemptuously of his uncle; and here he readily embraces it, with a witty and sarcastic turn of expression. I cannot think Mr. Steevens's explanation of this passage happy. Hamlet turns quickly, from the body of Polonius, to a severe and pointed reproach on the King: 'My uncle (says he) I grant you, has the *body*, the outside show and pageantry of a monarch; but he wants the dignity and virtues which constitute true royalty.' What he says, a
little

little after, by calling the King 'a thing of nothing,' confirms me in my opinion.

H A M L E T.

A thing of nothing.

'A thing of nothing,' or a matter of no value, is an expression so common to all times, and, I believe, to all languages, that Mr. Steevens might have spared himself the trouble of quoting half a dozen authorities, from plays, to authenticate it.

I D E M.

I see a cherub that sees them.

'I see a spirit that looks into the bottom of your purpose in sending me to England.'

Scene IV.

H A M L E T.

Good Sir, whose powers are these?

This

This scene, which contains much excellent matter, after having been for a long time disused, was restored to the stage by Mr. Thomas Sheridan.

F O N T I N B R A S.

Claims the conveyance of a promis'd march
Over his kingdom.

That is : ' Tell the King, that we now
claim the performance of his promise;
which is, leave to march, unmolested, an
army through his dominions.'

H A M L E T.

Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats
Will not debate the question of this straw.

That is : ' The contention about this
small spot of ground, will not be settled
without a large expence of blood and trea-
sure.'

I D E M.

————— What is man,
If his chief good and *market of his time*
Be but to sleep and feed?

' Mar-

‘Market of his time, means the *chief end of his being*.

Mr. Addison, in his *Cato*, has improved the thought :

————— But what is life ?

’Tis not to stalk about, and draw fresh air,
From time to time, and gaze upon the sun.

H A M L E T.

Such large *discourse*.

Discourse is, perhaps, from the Italian,
discurso.

I D E M.

————— Rightly to be great,

Is not to stir without great argument :
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw,
When honour’s at the stake.

The slightest affront, given with a
formed intention to insult and provoke, has
been ever held a sufficient cause of resentment.---A case in point is the behaviour
of

of the Spaniards to the English on Falk-land-island.

I D E M.

————— Fight for a spot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause.

Something like this we read in that admirable Dialogue of Lucian, between Mercury and Charon, called *Speculantes*. 'See (says Mercury to Charon) those Argives and Lacedemonians fighting together, and their half-dead general inscribing a trophy with his blood.'---What do they fight for?' replies Charon.---- 'Why, for the little spot of ground on which they stand !'

Scene V.

H O R A T I O.

Her mood will needs be pitied.

Her

‘ Her insanity demands compassion and relief.’

————— We have done but greenly,
In *bugger-mugger* to inter him.

Dr. Johnson deserves commendation for restoring the old text of *bugger-mugger*, instead of *in private*; but surely Mr. Steevens need not have enlarged the margin, by producing four or five authorities, from old authors, for a word that is still in use amongst the common people.

G E N T L E M A N .

The ratifiers and props of every *ward*.

The explanation of this line, by Dr. Warburton, who connects it with the two preceding lines, seems preferable to any other. The word *ward* is taken from the division of a city into *wards* or *districts* of government.

K I N G .

K I N G.

——— Do not fear our person :
 There's such divinity doth hedge a king,
 That treason dares not peep at what it would.

To the action of Keen was given the epithet *majestic*. In person he was tall and athletic : Lu. Du Guernier, in his picture to Addison's Cato, has so represented him. — When he spoke these lines, so commanding were his look and whole deportment, the audience accompanied them always with the loudest applause.

L A E R T E S.

Nature is fine in love ; and, where 'tis so,
 It sends some precious instance of itself
 After the thing it loves.

Ophelia's case was very distressful. —
 Her love to Hamlet had the sanction of
 Polonius, with the approbation of the
 King and Queen. The lover, by mistake,
 Vol. III. K kills

kills the father.. This bar to union with the man she loved, could not be removed. Madnefs was the natural consequence. — Dr. Johnson's explanation of the passage above cited is very elegant; but the doctrine it inculcates is, that love refines our natures. So Iago to Roderigo, in Othello, 'If thou be'st valiant, as they fay, bafe men; being in love, have then a nobility in their natures more than is native to them.'

O P H E L I A.

There's *rue* for you.

In prefenting *rue* to the Queen, Mrs. Cibber pronounced the word *rue* with a particular emphasis, and at the same time looked at her with great expression.

I D E M.

You may wear your *rue* with a difference.

The meaning I take to be this: 'Your majesty had cause, indeed, to mourn for
one

one husband's death ; but, since you have married another, you may mix sorrow and gladness together.

Till the sweet character of Ophelia was personated by Mrs. Cibber, it was not well understood, at least for these last sixty years. — Mrs. Betterton, says Colley Cibber, was much celebrated for her action in Shakspeare's plays ; and Sir William Davenant gave her such an idea of it as he could catch from the boy-Ophelias he had seen before the civil wars. --- Mrs. Booth's figure, voice, and deportment, in this part, raised in the minds of the spectators, an amiable picture of an innocent, unhappy maid : but she went no farther. Of Mrs. Clive's Ophelia I shall only say, that I regret that the first comic actress in the world should so far mistake her talents as to attempt it.

I cannot agree with an excellent observer, that the distracted Ophelia is a personage of insensibility. She rather re-

seemles that to which she compares Hamlet's madness, 'sweet bells out of tune : ' the sound is still preserved in them, though irregularly played upon. It is rather, I think, sensibility deranged, and deserted by reason. She seems, at times, to recollect her scattered senses ; and throws out, though disorderly, truths, solemn and affecting, in the most pathetic expression.

I D E M.

Lord ! we know what we are, but we cannot tell what we shall be.

No eloquence can paint the distressed and distracted look of Mrs. Cibber, while she uttered this sentence.

No actress has hitherto revived the idea of Mrs. Cibber's Ophelia, except Mrs. Baddeley ; whose pleasing sensibility, melodious voice, and correspondent action, made us less regret the great actress in this part.

And for the purpose I'll anoint my sword.

This unexpected change of disposition in Laertes, must have struck every reader of the play. A young man of high breeding, with a noble sense of honour, who, from the warmth of filial piety, was ready to take arms against his sovereign, on a sudden becomes a confederate with a vile plotter, to destroy a prince. Shakspeare is generally such a complete master of nature, and so faithful a delineator of character, that we must not hastily condemn him. I am afraid he has trusted more than he ought to the reader's or spectator's sagacity. Laertes had been closeted by the usurper, who had doubtless thrown as much odium as he could upon his nephew; he would not inform him that Hamlet had by chance or mistake put an end to his father's life, but rather that he had dispatched him by an act of violence or treachery. How far

this supposition may justify our author, I know not; but surely, if he had produced on the stage, such a conversation between the King and Laertes as I have suggested, it would have alleviated the guilt of the latter.

The fourth act of Hamlet has been censured by some critics, as much inferior to the three preceding acts. If we should grant that, yet it is certainly not without its merit. Laertes, whom Polonius and the King had given leave to travel to France in the first act, returns in the fourth; and, finding his father dead, and no authentic relation to be obtained in what manner he died, from a spirit of resentment, he raises a tumult in the palace.— The madness of Ophelia is a beautiful dramatic incident, and will alone make that part of the play very interesting.— Laertes is at first rash and violent; and soon after becomes an associate in villanous practices, for which I have endeavoured, in some sort, to account. The act closes with

with an affecting relation of Ophelia's death, which contributes to the fixing Laertes in his resolution to destroy Hamlet by any means.

A&t V.

The Grave-diggers.

The making a grave upon the stage, and the dialogue of the Grave-diggers, Voltaire censures as the most absurd violation of all dramatic rules. And indeed, were the scene to be weighed in Aristotle's scales, or finally discussed by the French writers, who are always chewing the hulks of the Greek and Roman critics, much could not be said in behalf of our author. But Shakspeare was a man to whom Aristotle would have fallen down and worshipped, as the author of the Essay on Falstaff has pleasantly said.

Candid foreigners will be pleased to reflect, that when this man wrote, the

English stage was in its infancy ; that plays, written according to time, place, and action, were then almost unknown ; and writers, who had the skill to combine the unities, had little else to recommend them to their audiences.

The *medium* through which human wit and moral truth are to be conveyed, is surely not to be so much considered as these qualities themselves. To see a grave opened, and the scalps of those who had been buried in the church-yard, thrown wantonly about, must excite reflections to abate our pride and strengthen our humanity. This doctrine Hamlet himself holds forth to us :
‘ Did these bones cost no more than to play at loggats with them ? Mine ache to think of them.’

The moral and pathetic reflections on the skull of Yorick, are, in my opinion, a compensation for all the oddities, or, if the critics please, the absurdities, of this extraordinary scene. Should it be possible, some twenty years hence, for an acquaintance

ance to discover the skull of an eminent wit, who had, like Yorick, 'set the table in a roar;—*a Flute, perhaps;*—would not some such sentiments, as those uttered by Hamlet on the king's jester, find their way from the mind of the observer? How would he moralise, and compare present deformity with past gaiety!

It is very probable, that the Yorick here described was one of the court-fools hired to divert the leisure-hours of Queen Elizabeth. And it is most likely that our author celebrates the famous Clod, who died some time before the accession of K. James.

Clod was a clown of uncommon wit and ready observation. Fuller records a jest of his, which, it was said, proved fatal to Dean Perne, who, in the space of twelve years, had changed his religion four times. Queen Elizabeth, in company with Archbishop Whitgift, Dean Perne, and her jester, Clod, was desirous to go abroad on a wet day. Clod used the following argument to prevent her majesty from going out :

out : ' Heaven,' says he, ' Madam, dissuades you, for it is cold and wet ; and earth dissuades you, for it is moist and dirty. Heaven dissuades you, too, by this heavenly man, Archbishop Whitgift ; and earth dissuades you,—your fool, Clod, such a lump of clay as myself. And, if neither will prevail with you, *here is one that is neither heaven nor earth, but hangs between both*,—Dr. Perne ; and he also dissuades you.'

Augustine Sly, Tarleton, Kempe, or some old actor of the comic cast, was the original Grave-digger. Cabe Underhill, a comedian whom Sir William Davenant pronounced to be one of the truest players for humour he ever saw, acted this part forty years successively. Underhill was a jolly and droll companion, who, if we may believe such historians as Tom Brown, divided his gay hours between Bacchus and Venus with no little ardour. Tom, I think, makes Underhill one of the gill-drinkers of his time ; men who resorted to taverns, in the middle of the day, under pretence of drinking

drinking Bristol milk (for so good sherry was then called) to whet their appetites, where they indulged themselves too often in ebriety. Underhill acted till he was past eighty. He was so excellent in the part of Trinculo, in the Tempest, that he was called Prince Trinculo. He had an admirable vein of pleasantry, and told his lively stories, says Brown, with a bewitching smile. The same author says, he was so afflicted with the gout, that he prayed one minute and cursed the other. His shambling gait, in his old age, was no hindrance to his acting particular parts. He retired from the theatre in 1703. Some years before he died, he solicited a benefit, which was recommended to the public by the kind-hearted Steele. The part he chose was the Grave-digger in Hamlet; but Cabe was so unlike his former self, that he appeared the ghost of what he had been, and was dismissed with compassion. Colley Cibber, who, in his admirable account of the old actors, has spoken at large

large of Underhill's merits, says, he died about four or five years afterwards, a pensioner of Sir Richard Steele and the players, who obtained a patent from George I.

That chaste copier of nature, B. Jonson, the comedian, for above forty years, gave a true picture of an arch clown in the Grave-digger. His jokes and repartees had a strong effect, from his seeming insensibility of their force. His large speaking blue eyes he fixed steadily on the person to whom he spoke, and was never known to have wandered from the stage to any part of the theatre. Jonson was the Hemskirk or D. Teniers of the theatre; the honest Dutch painter, who contents himself with giving a portrait of mere nature. I should have observed, that Jonson was originally a painter by profession.

Next to this excellent man, Mr. Yates must be placed. In manner they strongly resembled each other. They were disciples of the same school,---Nature was their guide,

guide, and to her alone they paid their devotion.

Parsons and Quick are actors born to relax the muscles, and set mankind a tit-tering. They are equally happy in the Grave-digger, but with more heightening than the two former. Edwin is chaster in his outline than both, for he does not colour so warmly.

To rank a country actor with these gentlemen of the established London theatres may seem bold and unprecedented; but I am not afraid to name, among men of comic genius, Mr. James Robertson, of York; a man, like Yorick, *of infinite wit, and of most excellent fancy*. What gentleman of the county of York, does not know Jemmy Robertson? What critic so four as not to be pleased with his fallies of humour, whether his own or faithfully given from his original author on the stage? His being a very pleasing actor, and a lively companion, forms but a small part
of

of his character. --- He is respected for merit of a more durable kind : for his honesty, worth, and friendly disposition.

Scene II.

Hamlet and Horatio.

H A M L E T.

As our *statists* do.

Mr. Steevens rightly observes, that *statists* means *statesmen*. Here also it comprehends all men of birth, rank, and fashion ; all fine gentlemen, who, from affectation, thought it an indignity to their quality to write a plain and legible hand.

I D E M.

Doth by their insinuation grow.

Hamlet here is accounting for his behaviour to Rosencraus and Guildenstern, whose fate, he says, was owing to their own

own conduct. If we should not agree, with Dr. Warburton, that these men corruptly, insinuated themselves into the service of Hamlet, yet we must own that they were very ready and officious instruments of the King. And, although it does not appear, from the context, that they knew the contents of their commission, 'to destroy the prince,' yet I believe the author punishes them, as well as Polonius, for being over busy, and thrusting themselves into any employment, without inquiring whether it was right or wrong, just or unjust. No time was more infamous, for gross flattery to the prince, than the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. This our author knew; and this was one *mark of the age and body of the time*, which his manly nature despised, and wished to remove.

I D E M.

----- Is't not to be damn'd,
To let this canker of our nature come
To farther evil?

That

That is : ‘ Would it not be an unpardonable crime, to suffer this villain, the destroyer of the human species, to proceed in his wickedness, and go on, unpunished, from crime to crime ?’

The advocates for passive and unlimited obedience will on no account permit resistance to authority.--- ‘ What ?’ you will say, ‘ on no account whatever ?’--- ‘ O yes ! in the case of lawful succession, where that is interrupted by violence or treachery, as in the case of Hamlet : there, indeed, the usurper may be destroyed, by superior power or wily stratagem.’—— So then, it seems from this mode of arguing, that the interest of one man and his family is of more importance to society than that of millions !

I D E M.

The more *fond* and winnowed opinions.

I think nothing can be more clear than that Shakspere means, by this expression,
that

that such fellows as Ostrick, by acquiring a little fashionable jargon, with a considerable stock of impudence, contrive to pass, upon men of the most approved judgment, for complete courtiers. To impose their trash upon *fond*, or *foolish*, people, could be no matter of surprise. It is very probable, that, instead of *fond*, the author wrote *sound*.

I D E M.

Give me your pardon, Sir.

No part of this speech of Hamlet should be spoken but that which Mr. Steevens has restored, beginning with —

Sir, in this audience, —
and so to the end. To the rest Hamlet gives the lie most shamefully.

L A E R T E S.

I am satisfied in nature.

Vol. III.

L

Laertes

Laertes is determined to act treacherously, and therefore seems puzzled to return a proper answer to Hamlet's fair address and noble apology. To that, I think, we must place his referring the matter in dispute to able judges of affronts. His offering to receive his antagonist's proffered love as love, and protesting not to wrong it, is as infamous as Hamlet's attributing his violent behaviour at Ophelia's grave to his madness.

Q U E E N.

He is fat and scant of breath.

In a note to this passage, Mr. Steevens says, that John Lowin, who was the original Falstaff, was no less celebrated for his Henry VIII. and Hamlet. Mr. Steevens had forgotten, in a note of his on Henry IV. that Lowin had ever acted Falstaff: for the letters *Old*, placed to a speech of that character, he, rather than suppose it to stand for *Oldcastle*, which, I believe,

believe, was originally intended, would insinuate, they might be the first letters of the actor's name who played Falstaff: this it is to support an hypothesis at all events. — I believe that Betterton, who was an unlimited stage-genius, was the only actor that ever represented the three parts of Hamlet, Falstaff, and Harry VIII. How Lowin could be said to have acted Hamlet, is somewhat surprising, as he was celebrated chiefly for parts of humour.* Taylor is universally said to have been the original Hamlet; and, at the time these words, of 'fat and scant of breath,' were put in the Queen's mouth, he might have been plumper in person, than the author wished he should be for the actor of young Hamlet.

L 2

L A E R-

* That Lowin sometimes acted tragic characters cannot be denied. — He played Domitian in the Roman Actor, and Aubrey in Rollo, when the actors were interrupted by the soldiers, at Holland-House.

L A E R T E S.

—— Mine and my father's death
Come not on thee.

Laertes had justly purchased his own death by his treacherous conduct; Hamlet could have brought no guilt on his head on that score. Had he said, indeed, —

—— My father's and my sister's death
Come not on thee, ——

he would have been more consistent. Laertes is not a favourite with the audience or the actors.

H O R A T I O.

Now cracks a noble heart.

Hamlet is not a character for imitation; there are many features of it that are disagreeable. Notwithstanding his apparent blemishes, I do not think that he is so deformed as Mr. Steevens has represented him. Aaron Hill had, above forty years ago, in a paper called the Prompter, observed,

served, that, besides Hamlet's assumed insanity, there was in him a melancholy, which bordered on madness, arising from his peculiar situation. But surely Hamlet did not come, as Mr. Steevens says, to disturb the funeral of Ophelia; for, till Laertes called the dead body his sister, he knew not whose grave was before him. Nor did he manifest the least sign of wrath, till Laertes bestowed a more than tenfold curse upon him. His jumping into the grave, when unexpectedly provoked, may be pardoned. Laertes seized him by the throat; and even then, instead of returning violence for violence, Hamlet begs him to desist. The madness of Ophelia is no farther to be charged to his account, than as the unhappy consequence of a precipitant and mistaken action.

It is evident that Hamlet considered Rosencraus and Guildenstern as the King's accomplices and instruments; nor indeed can we absolve them of that guilt. They

L 3

were

were the cabinet-counsellors of a villain and a murderer; and, though they were strangers to *all* his guilt, it is not improbable that they were acquainted with the secret of their commission. They were witnesses of the King's anxiety at and after the play which was acted before him; and, when he told them, *he liked him not*, they saw no apparent reason for his saying so, except Hamlet's behaviour at the play; which, however frolicksome it might be, was not surely wicked. Upon a mature inspection of their conduct through the play, they must be stigmatized with the brand of willing spies upon a prince, their quondam school-fellow, whose undoubted title to the crown they well knew, and of whose wrongs they had not any feeling. In short, to sum up their characters in a few words, they were ready to comply with any command, provided they acquired, by their compliance, honour and advantage.

Mr.

Mr. Garrick, about eight or nine years since, offered the public an amendment of Shakspeare's Hamlet. The respect which the public owed to so eminent a genius, disposed them to receive his alterations favourably. The first act, which, in my opinion, the author's genius carries on with wonderful rapidity, he had observed was immoderately long; for this reason he divided it into two, the first ending with Hamlet's determined resolution to watch, with Horatio and Marcellus, in expectation of seeing the ghost of his father. In consequence of this arrangement, the old third act was extended to the fourth. Little or no change in language or scenery was attempted, till the fifth act, in which Laertes arrives, and Ophelia is distracted, as in the old play. The plotting-scenes, between the King and Laertes, to destroy Hamlet, were entirely changed, and the character of Laertes rendered more estimable. Hamlet,

having escaped from Rosencraus and Guildenstern, returns with a firm resolution to avenge the death of his father. The Grave-diggers were absolutely thrown out of the play. The audience were not informed of the fate of Ophelia; and the Queen, instead of being poisoned on the stage, was led from her seat, and said to be in a state of insanity, owing to her sense of guilt. When Hamlet attacks the King, the latter draws his sword and defends himself, and is killed in the rencounter. Laertes and Hamlet die of their mutual wounds.

To such material changes, in this favourite tragedy, the audience submitted during the life of the alterer; but they did not approve what they barely endured. The scenes and characters of Shakspeare, with all their blemishes, will not bear radical or violent alteration. The author had drawn Claudius a coward, as well as a villain and usurper; and this strong check

check upon guilt, and stigma upon wickedness, ought by no means to be removed. Garrick, if I remember right, used to say, that, before his alteration of Hamlet, the King used to be stuck like a pig, on the stage: but, by giving the murderer courage, this great actor did not see that he lessened the meanness of his character, which the author takes care to inculcate throughout the play. The brave villain, like Rich. III. we justly hate, but we cannot despise him. Why the fate of Ophelia should be left uncertain, as well as that of the Queen, I cannot conceive. But the spectators of Hamlet would not part with their old friends the Grave-diggers. The people soon called for Hamlet as it had been acted from time immemorial.

The dialogue of this tragedy approaches very near to the conversation of the present times. Many of the scenes display wit as brilliant as that of Congreve, with the ease and familiarity of Vanbrugh. The argument is often profound, and the satire

tire just and poignant. The Cid was not more a favourite with the French nation than Hamlet with ours. The great number of proverbial expressions, taken from Hamlet, which are brought into the senate, uttered at the bar, and retailed and applied in almost every company, is a certain proof, that this play has not only been acted more frequently than others, but that the sentiments and maxims it contains, have made a lasting impression on its spectators. Dr. Johnson's general review, at the close of his remarks on Hamlet, is accurate, elegant, and instructive.

It is obvious to me, that Shakspeare, in the celebrated soliloquy on a future state, piously intended a dissuasive from self-murder.

Since my remarks on this tragedy went to the press, I have seen a new Hamlet, in the person of Mr. Kemble, brother to Mrs. Siddons. I congratulate the public on the prospect of much rational entertainment,

tainment, from the joint efforts of two persons of uncommon genius in the art which they profess.

Though, in drawing the outline of Hamlet, it was scarcely possible Mr. Kemble should differ from preceding actors, yet his particular emphasis, pauses, and other novelties in acting, have surprised the public, and divided the critics; some of whom greatly censure, while others as warmly extol his peculiarities.

The audience will, in general, consider every thing that is unusual with a jealous eye, and perhaps with some reason; at the same time, men of candour will reflect, that the judicious actor must have considered every material line of his part, every action and attitude, with more attention than the spectator can, who balances in his mind one player with another, and determines the merit of the performer more from comparison than mature deliberation.

If

If Booth and Garrick deserved much praise for discovering beauties which had long lain hid, in some capital parts,—why should not we encourage the industry of every young stage-adventurer, who, by a deep search into character, finds out new methods of pleasing, provided they are not inconsistent with the author's intention?

What the actor is chiefly to guard against, in this case, is too much refinement; to beware, lest a passion for novelty mislead him into overstrained niceties.

Mr. Kemble's pauses are, I believe, very judicious, though to many they appeared long. The actor must take into the account the tone of the audience; for the rule of acting, in conformity to the rule of speaking, must not contradict the general sense. A player cannot, with safety to himself, affect to appear wiser than his judges.

As

As I do not propose to go through an examen of Mr. Kemble's Hamlet, I shall add but little more on the subject.

In the impassioned scene, between Hamlet and his Mother, in the third act, Kemble's emphasis and action, however different from those of all former Hamlets we have seen, bore the genuine marks of solid judgment and exquisite taste. I never saw an audience more deeply affected, or more generously grateful to the actor who had so highly raised their passions.

Mr. Kemble is tall and well made; his countenance expressive, his voice strong and flexible, his action and deportment animated and graceful. His salutations are said by some to be too much studied, and, in the scene of fencing, too formal and ceremonious. I will not pretend to determine, whether trials of skill and the exercise with foils, between princes and men of high rank, and those of inferior condition, are attended with the same forms; but shall observe, that, though we are taught
our

our outward behaviour by the dancing-master, the salute and address of the well-bred man will always distinguish him from his teacher.

As the managers of both theatres have seemed to try their strength lately in the play of Hamlet, I shall take some notice of a few under parts in the play. — Horatio is an excellent character of friendship, and fits very becomingly on my old acquaintance, Mr. Thomas Hull, the friend of Shensstone, and the approved speaker of Mason. Mr. Whitfield has lately succeeded Mr. Hull, at Covent Garden, in Horatio; and, in action and speech, is decently becoming. At Drury-lane, Mr. Farren, a young actor of merit, does justice to this amiable part. He does not endeavour to make more of his situations in the scene than he ought; he observes a proper subordination, and keeps in mind the advice of the poet, *not to o'erstep the modesty of nature*. The kingly behaviour of Clarke seems more important than the majesty of Packer, who
always

always speaks sense, but not with sufficient force. The Grave-diggers, Parsons and Quick, are admirably matched. Though I do not dislike Mrs. Hopkins in the Queen, yet I would rather see her in Mrs. Heidelberg ; her excellence is in comedy. Mrs. Inchbald's figure is pleasing, and her judgement stronger than her power of utterance.

Dryden.

Dryden.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

The Restoration opens the theatres.—King's and Duke of York's companies.—Shakespeare less valued than Fletcher and Jonson.—Heroic tragedy.—Dryden's defence of it.—Maximin's defiance of the gods.—Aurengzebe, Morat.—Kynaston and Booth.—Celebrated lines on the vicissitudes of life, with an answer.—Dryden forsakes rhiming tragedy.—His All for Love.—The true language of tragedy.—Troilus and Cressida; when revived.—Old authors censured.—Charles II. and his courtiers.—Buckingham, Rochester, and Dorset.—Mermaid, the Devil, Roe-buck, &c.—Beef-steak club.—John Beard.—Low company.—Mr. Wolsley and Rochester's Valentinian.—Poets compared.—Their characters

ters of gentlemen.—Laziness or inability
in dramatists.—*Sir George Ethieridge.*—
Dorimant.—*Duke of Dorset.*—*Jeremy*
Collier and Dryden.—*Licentious language*
of tragedy.—*Dryden's defence of himself.*
—*His death.*

SOON after the Restoration of Charles
II. the doors of the theatre, which
had been shut for twenty years, were
thrown open. The king and the Duke
of York formed two separate companies
of comedians, who were honoured with
the title of his majesty's servants. The
court directed the general taste, and took
the lead in all public diversions, more espe-
cially in the amusements of the stage.

In looking over the fragment of Downes,
I see little respect paid to Shakspeare, much
to Beaumont and Fletcher, and still more
to Ben Jonson, in proportion to the num-
ber of his plays. Hart and Mohun, the ma-
nagers of the king's theatre, revived only
three of Shakspeare's plays; and Davenant,

at the duke's house, about five. But, indeed, a regard for the plays of the last age, as they were then called, was swallowed up in a passion for new-fangled compositions. Heroic tragedies in rhyme, fraught with bombastic diction and extravagant sentiment; and witty comedies, abounding with smart repartee and loose action, were the immediate successors of the old drama, which was founded on nature; where the dialogue was formed from genuine manners, passions which arose from character and incident, and where the catastrophe was closed with an instructive moral. With much wit, and plausible argument, Dryden has endeavoured to vindicate the unnatural flights of his *Almanzor* and *Almahide*, of *Tyrannic Love*, and others of his rhiming tragedies: but, whatever beauties of imagination, and sentiment, with harmony of numbers, they may contain, no man will sit down to read them, at this day, without blending laughter and contempt with esteem and admiration. Long quotations,

to prove what is so generally known,
would be impertinent. I shall content
myself with producing a singular instance of
ranting blasphemy, for such it was in the
mouth of Maximin, from the last act of
the Tyrannic Love :

What had the gods to do with me or mine !
Did I molest your heaven ! ———
Why should you, then, make Maximin your foe,
Who paid you tribute which he need not do ?
Your altars I with smoke of gum did crown,
For which you lean'd your hungry nostrils down ;
All dally gaping for my incense there,
More than your sun could draw you in a year,
And you for this these plagues on me have sent :
But, by the gods,—by Maximin I meant,—
Henceforth I and my world
Hostility with you and yours declare :
Look to it, gods ! for you th' aggressors are.
Keep you your rain and sunshine in your skies,
And I'll keep back my flame and sacrifice.
Your trade of heav'n shall soon be at a stand,
And all your goods lie heavy on your hand.

An audience who could bear such rant's
as this, and relish the following scene with
Placidius, who stabs the Emperor, and is,

in his turn, stabbed by him, must have had a very particular taste for bombast in words, and absurdity in action. Such auditors must have been very unqualified judges of Shakspeare, Jonson, and Fletcher.

Dryden's last and most perfect tragedy in rhyme was *Aurengzebe*. In this play, the passions are strongly depicted, the characters well discriminated, and the diction more familiar and dramatic, than in any of his preceding pieces. Hart and Mohun greatly distinguished themselves in the characters of *Aurengzebe* and the old Emperor. Mrs. Marshall was admired in *Nourmahul*; and Kynaston was much extolled by Cibber, for his happy expression of the arrogant and savage fierceness in *Morat*.—‘Booth, in some part of this character, (says the same critical historian) was too tame, from an apprehension of raising the mirth of the audience improperly.’

Though I pay great deference to Cibber's judgment, yet I am not sure whether

whether Booth was not in the right. And I cannot help approving the answer which this actor gave to one who told him, he was surpris'd that he neglected to give a spirited turn to the passage in question :

N O U R M A H U L.

'Twill not be safe to let him live an hour.

M O R A T.

I'll do't, to shew my arbitrary power.

' Sir (said Booth) it was not through negligence, but by design, that I gave no spirit to that ludicrous bounce of Morat. I know very well, that a laugh of approbation may be obtained from the understanding few ; but there is nothing more dangerous than exciting the laugh of simpletons, who know not where to stop. The majority is not the wisest part of the audience ; and, for that reason, I will run no hazard.*

M 3

The

* Life of Booth, by Th. Cibber.

The court greatly encouraged the play of *Aurengzebe*. The author tells us, in his dedication, that Charles II. altered an incident in the plot, and pronounced it to be the best of all Dryden's tragedies. It was revived at Drury-lane, about the year 1726, with the public approbation; the old Emperor, Mills; Wilks, *Aurengzebe*; Booth, Morat; Indiana, Mrs. Oldfield; Nourmahul, Mrs. Porter; *Melinda*, the first wife of *Theophilus Ciber*, a very pleasing actress, in person agreeable, and in private life unblemished. She died in 1733.

In this tragedy, *Aurengzebe's* complaint of the vicissitudes and disappointments of life, is forcibly described and beautifully varied. It is still repeated by all lovers of poetry;

When I consider life, 'tis all a cheat;

Yet, fool'd with hope, men favour the deceit;

Trust on, in hopes to-morrow will repay:

To-morrow's falser than the former day;

Lies

Lies more ; and, when it says we shall be bless'd
With new joys, cuts off what we possess'd.
Strange cozenage ! None would live past years again,
Yet all hope pleasure from what yet remain ;
And from the dregs of life hope to receive
What the first sprightly runnings cannot give.
I'm tir'd with waiting for this chemic gold,
Which fools us young, and beggars us when old !

In the judgment of Addison,* these are
the best lines in the play. But the reply
of Nourmahul, which contains a very
full and pertinent answer to Aurengzebe,
I never heard any body mention except
Dr. Johnson :

N O U R M A H U L.

'Tis not for nothing that we life pursue :
It pays our hopes with something that is new.
Each day's a mistress unenjoy'd before ;
Like travellers, we are pleas'd with seeing more.
Did you but know what joys your way attend,
You would not hurry to your journey's end.

M 4

But,

* Spectator.

But, notwithstanding Dryden had exerted all his strength to excel in this species of rhiming tragedy, and had defended it very strenuously in his excellent Essay on Dramatic Poetry, he at last grew tired of his bells, and wished to be a rhiming pack-horse no longer. This he confesses in the prologue to this very play :

But he has now another taste of wit ;
And, to confess a truth, though out of time,
Grows weary of his long-lov'd mistress, rhyme.

Having seen, in all probability, those eminent actors, Hart and Mohun, in the much-admir'd scene of contention in the fourth act of Julius Cæsar, he breaks out, in the same prologue, into a generous confession of Shakspeare's superiority :

But, spite of all his pride, a secret shame
Invades his breast at Shakspeare's sacred name !
And, when he hears his godlike Romans rage,
He, in a just despair, would quit the stage.

Two years after Aurengzebe had been acted, Dryden brought to the stage his *All for Love*; which is, I think, the first play, after the Restoration, in which was revived the true dramatic style.

The scene between Antony and Ventidius, in the first act of this play, is written in such colloquial language, as might be spoken by the humblest and the most exalted characters:

ANTONY.

I would be private: leave me.

VENTIDIUS.

——— Sir, I love you,
And therefore will not leave you.

ANTONY.

——— Actium, Actium, oh!

VENTIDIUS.

It fits too near you.

ANTONY.

ANTONY.

Here, here, it lies ! a lump of lead by day ;
And, in my short, distracted, nightly slumbers,
The hag that rides me in my dreams !

VENTIDIUS.

Out with it ; give it vent.

ANTONY.

——— Urge not my shame.

I lost a battle !

VENTIDIUS.

——— So has Julius done.

ANTONY.

Thou favour'st me, and speak'st not half thou
think'st :

For Julius fought it out, and lost it fairly ;
But Antony ———

VENTIDIUS.

——— Nay, stop not.

This is the true language of nature,
and of such passion as is congenial to the
breast of every man. In this interview
of

of Antony and his General, the poet seems to have exhausted his strength: the rest of the play, though not carelessly written, is much inferior to this noble outset.

In a year or two after, Dryden gave a fresh proof of his veneration for Shakspeare, by reviving his Troilus and Cressida with considerable alterations and improvements. The noble scene between Troilus and Hector, in the third act, is the invention of the reviver, and written in emulation of the quarrel between Brutus and Cassius in Julius Cæsar. This play was revived by Rich, at Covent-garden, in 1734. Walker acted Hector with his usual spirit and animated action; Troilus fell to Ryan's share; Quin was esteemed an admirable Therfites; and Hippisley excited much mirth in Pandarus. Mrs. Buchanan, a very fine woman and a pleasing actress, who died soon after in child-bed,

bed, was the Cressida: Mr. Lacy, late manager of Drury-lane, acted Agamemnon; and Tom Chapman pleased himself with the obstreperous and discordant utterance of Diomed's passion for Cressida.

Dryden, at the same time that he justified the new species of heroic plays in rhyme, boldly attacked the comedies of the former age. The poets, in the reigns of Elizabeth and James, were, it seems, very low in their humour, and dull and unrefined in their dialogue. They were not so witty and smart in their repartees as the dramatists of their own times. Nay, he boasts, that the ladies and gentlemen in his days spoke more wit in conversation than the old dramatists in their plays. This superiority, in elegance of style, Dryden attributes to the influence of the court, and more particularly to the authority of Charles himself. The king had, indeed, by his exile, gained an education which few other princes could obtain. His misfortunes

tunes were, in this respect, of service to him. By them he was obliged to converse with different ranks of men; and this contributed to store his mind with knowledge, and soften his manners. He was universally said to be the best-bred man in his dominions. With scarcely any virtues, he had many amiable qualities; his affability and condescension were the charms, which, like a veil, covered the worst part of his character. But Charles contributed, more than any of his courtiers, to plunge the nation into vice and profligacy. During his whole reign, of twenty-four years, the kingdom was in a state of dissipation and ebriety; from which neither the plague in 1665, nor the dreadful fire of London the year after, nor two disastrous Dutch wars, with an unfortunate conspiracy against the public tranquillity, called the popish plot, could rouse them. The two choice favourites of Charles were the witty but infamous Duke of Buckingham, and the lively

lively and abandoned Rochester. It is true, he courted the friendship of all the wits of his time, and particularly the amiable Lord Dorset ; but he, observing the king to have no real integrity or worth, honestly rejected the friendship of a man whom in his heart he despised.

It is pleasant to hear Dryden and others very gravely assure us, that it was utterly impossible that the characters of our old poets could talk like gentlemen, because the authors themselves kept low company. The Mermaid, the Devil, and the Boar, it seems, did not receive such pleasant and witty fellows, in the reign of Queen Bess or of James I. as those who frequented the Royal Oak, the Mitre, and the Roebuck, in the days of Charles II. Beaumont, who, I believe, was no ill judge of mirth and good company, in an epistle to Ben Jonson, talks with rapture of the rich banquet of wit and admirable conversation which they had enjoyed at the Mermaid.

Nor

Nor can I think so meanly of Ben Jonson's club, at the Devil, as Dryden affects to do: that society could never be contemptible which had Ben at the head of it, with Shakspeare, Fletcher, and Beaumont, his associates; who were occasionally joined by Selden, Martin, Morley, afterwards Bishop of Winchester, Edmund Waller, and others of equal eminence. The beef-steak club, with their jolly member, John Beard, is surely one of the most respectable assemblies of jovial and agreeable companions in this metropolis; but I believe their good sense will hinder them from claiming a monopoly of cheerfulness; they will not say that their predecessors were dull blockheads, because they are dead, and they themselves are alive and merry: *Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona.*

I have said, that the two dearest companions of Charles were Villiers Duke of Buckingham, and Wilmot Earl of Rochester: the latter confessed to Dr. Burnet,

Burnet, that, for five years successively, he had been in a state of ebriety; and the former, notwithstanding his high rank in life, and uncommon vein of wit, became at last so odious for his vices, that his company was at length as much shunned as it had been before sought after and courted. In the preface to an edition of *Valentinian*, altered from Fletcher by Rochester, Mr. Wolsley, the editor, reproaches the original writer for keeping low company. — Could he possibly associate with men of worse principles, more debauched, and more meanly dissipated, than his friend, the earl? These blessed exemplars of courtly gallantry and fashionable wit, to whom no man in his proper senses would be a companion, were the bright meteors of a giddy age; and such as Dryden would oppose to the inferior society which Jonson and Shakspeare were reduced to the necessity of meeting. It is true, these antiquated
men,

men wanted that which the others enjoyed in a high degree, a relish for blasphemy and profaneness,* with a sovereign contempt for all order and decency. Of all their vices, ebriety seems to have been the most innocent:

The best method of trying the intrinsic merit of contending genius, is to compare the different compositions of each. Let me ask, whether the gentlemen; in the comedies of our old bards; Shakspeare, Jonson, and Fletcher, are not as replete with wit, and as free from low vulgarity, as those of Dryden, Wycherly, and Otway? Can they honestly place their Wildbloods, Rodophils, Woodalls, Horners, Courtines, and Beaugards, in competition

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* If the reader has an inclination to be acquainted with the wit and frolics of this sort of gentlemen, let him turn to honest Antony Wood's Diary of his Life, and read the history of a merry bout at the Cock in Bow-street: p. 187.

petition with the Mercutio and Benedick of Shakspeare, the Valentine and Loveless of Fletcher, or the Truewits and Clerimonts of Ben Jonson? Dryden's contempt of Mercutio is a severe censure on his want of attention to that admirable character.

The only dramatic writer, in all Charles's reign, who wrote with some decency of manners and modesty of language, was Sir George Etheridge. His *Man of Mode* is the original of that species of dramatic writing called genteel comedy. The second Duke of Dorset assured a gentleman, as greatly esteemed for his learning and abilities as his humanity and integrity,* that Dorimant was formed from two originals: his father, the witty Earl of Dorset, and Wilmot Earl of Rochester. This character is properly the first fine gentleman of the English stage; a more gay

* Mr. Thomas Sheridan.

gay and spirited man of pleasure has not been drawn since, unless we except the Sir Harry Wildair of Farquhar.

But the poets of Charles's days, either from idleness or want of ability, deprived the stage of that noble ornament of the comic muse, the poetic style, which was the growth of our country, and equally unknown to the Greeks and Romans as to our neighbours, the French. It is true, as Mr. Seward very judiciously observes, 'that, although the Greeks did not wholly deprive comedy of metre, they left it not the shadow of poetic diction or sentiment. But the Britons not only retained metre in their comedy, but also the strength and nerves of poetry; which, (says the same writer) was a good deal owing to our blank verse; which, at the same time that it is capable of the highest sublimity, the most extensive and noblest harmony of tragic and epic, yet, when

used familiarly, is so near the *sermo pedestris*, so easy and natural, as to be well adapted to the drollest comic dialogue.*

Our dramatic poets, though unwilling to reform themselves, at last found, in Collier, a severe, but just, corrector of their indecencies and blasphemy. The physic he administered was so powerful, that a sudden and almost effectual reformation took place. Dryden himself, who seldom gave up an argument to his adversary, shrunk from the charge, and pleaded guilty. The city of London was under particular obligations to this satirical critic; for a citizen, and especially an alderman, was sure to be the poet's game; he was at once dubbed a wittol and a cuckold. I believe, since Collier's book was published, our magistrates of London have pretty much escaped the ridicule of theatrical horns.—

* Seward's preface to Beaumont and Fletcher.

horns.—But Dryden, though he owned his guilt in very plain terms, would not quit the field without throwing a few stones at his monitor. He says, I think, with justice, that Collier was too much given to horse-play in his raillery; for his wit was blunt, though severe; and his style, though forcible, was coarse. ‘I will not (says Dryden) say, that the zeal of God’s house hath eaten him up, but I am sure it has devoured some part of his good manners.’ In farther defence of himself, and his poetic brothers, he confidently asserts, ‘there is more bawdy in one play of Beaumont and Fletcher, the Custom of the Country, than all ours together.’ That play has indeed much bad language in it, and some indecent characters; but no candid reader will say, that it is without scenes which are quite irreprehensible, and some personæ which no audience can dislike.—But Dryden should have called

to mind his own Limberham, or Kind Keeper. This comedy, from the beginning to the end, is one scene of lewdness and debauchery, without one sober dialogue, or one sufferable character. Father Aldo, whom, in the *dramatis personæ*, he terms an honest, good-natured free-hearted, old gentleman of the town, is the most abandoned debauchee that ever spent his time in a brothel. This wretch, who is, through age, incapable of all sensual enjoyment himself, becomes the servile and willing agent to supply the fuel of vice to others.

We cannot wonder, at the time such plays as Limberham were represented, that women of character were deprived of theatrical entertainment. In those days, it was a constant practice for the ladies to send their friends, of the male sex, as spies, or scouts, to observe the first night of representation. The play-house was then

then so offensive, that the citizens kept aloof from it, till the poets of their own faction brought whig politics to combat with tory principles.

I could have wished, that indecency had not stepped from the sock to the buskin: Dryden and Lee threw much obscenity, as well as profaneness, into their most admired heroic plays. Should we allow, that Lee's Sophonisba has many tender and passionate thoughts, it must also be owned that it abounds in passages fit only for a house of entertainment.—The old Emperor, and Nourmahul, his wife, in Aurengzebe, reproach one another in terms unsuitable to common decency as well as dignity of character.

But here let me stop; to make out a process against Dryden would be as cruel as ungrateful. The English versification is more indebted to him than to half the poets from Chaucer's time to the present.

Much has been said of this great author's personal conduct, of his religion, and morals.---Let me here quote a passage in his vindication, written by himself in a letter to John Dennis : *For my principles of religion, I will not justify them to you : I know yours are far different. For the same reason, I shall say nothing of my principles of state: I believe you, in yours, follow the dictates of your reason, as I, in mine, do those of my conscience; if I thought myself in an error, I would retract it. For my morals, between man and man, I am not to be my own judge. I appeal to the world, if I have deceived or defrauded any man; and, for my private conversation, they who see me every day, can be the best witnesses whether or no it be blameless and inoffensive.*—This letter was written about the year 1694, sometime before he undertook his Translation of Virgil. Dryden died of a mortification which began in his foot; and, some hours before his death,

death, he charged his son, Charles, not to permit a surgeon to make any operation on pretence of working a cure.

Dr. Johnson's Life of Dryden is a most valuable acquisition to learning; the criticism is profound, and the biography exact,

Otway.

Otway.

CHAPTER XL.

*Dryden fond of high-sounding diction. — Instances of it from Don Sebastian. — Otway ; — the first writer of genuine tragedy. — Wrote his first tragedies in rhyme. — Alcibiades. — Mrs. Elizabeth Barry. — Don Carlos. — Dryden. — Boheme and Mrs. Seymour. Otway's defects. — His Caius Marius. — His praise of Shakspeare. — Underhill and Nokes. — Epilogue to Caius Marius. — The Orphan. — Plot. — Language. — Venice Preserved. — Shakspeare. — Acasto. — Charles II. — Duke of Ormond. — Duke of Buckingham. — Anecdote of Carey Dillon and the Duke of Ormond. — Otway's disrespect for the clergy ; — unjust. — Eminent divines. — L'Estrange. — Euripides. — Two last lines of
the*

the Orphan.—Oedipus.—First actors of the Orphan. --- Betterton.—Mountfort.—Williams.---Contention between Powell and Williams. --- Smith's epitaph, written by Booth. --- Some anecdotes of the life of Mrs. Barry. -- Earl of Rochester. --- Tragedy of the Earl of Essex. --- Queen Elizabeth.--- Mrs. Porter. --- Mrs. Barry's excellence acknowledged by Betterton.--- Last part she played.--- Her death and epitaph.--- Cause of her death. --- Chamont.---The elder Mills.---Quin.--Booth and Walker in Polydore.--- Wilks's Castalio. --- Barry. --- Mr. Garrick. — Mrs. Porter and Mrs. Cibber.

NOTWITHSTANDING I had observed, to the honour of Dryden, that he was the first of our dramatic poets, in the reign of Charles II. who, from his imitation of Shakspeare's manner, revived natural and colloquial dialogue in tragedy, yet it must be said, that he retained, to the last, a predilection for the marvellous and high-sounding

founding style. Though he had it in his power to be the lawful monarch of true poetical language, he could not abandon the swell and turbulent diction of the arbitrary tyrant. What can we say in defence of many rhapsodical effusions in one of his best tragedies, *Don Sebastian, K. of Portugal*? Dorax, after describing, in very noble terms, the character of Sebastian, wishes to have fought him and to have died with him :

—— I, too, would have been slain,
That, catching hold upon his flitting ghost,
I might have robb'd him of his op'ning heav'n,
And dragg'd him down with me, spite of predesti-
nation !

And Sebastian himself :

Let Fortune empty her whole quiver on me !
I have a soul, that, like an ample shield,
Can take in all, and verge enough for more !

To Thomas Otway was reserved the honour of giving tragedy-its true and genuine
tone

tone of language, divested of unnatural flight and unnecessary pomp. This writer began, like the rest of our dramatic poets in that age, with tragedy in rhyme. In his Alcibiades, the first and weakest of his tragedies, the public found enough to be pleased; and, in this play, the great actress, Mrs. Barry, gave the first indication of her rising merit. In his second dramatic piece, he formed his plot from St. Real's History of Don Carlos, Prince of Spain. It was acted with very great applause, and contributed at once to raise the reputation and mend the fortune of the author. In his preface, Otway gives a short anecdote of an envious poet, who declared, *That, egad he knew not a line in Don Carlos he would be the author of.* In the Rehearsal, *egad* is a favourite and frequent expression of Poet Bayes: Dryden, who had no small share of envy, was, in all probability, the person aimed at. Don Carlos continued long a favourite drama; it was revived,

above

above fifty years since, at the theatre in Lincoln's-inn-fields; when Boheme's action in Philip, and Mrs. Seymour, by her excellence in the Queen, rendered their names celebrated, and contributed to establish a company struggling with difficulties.

But Otway wanted the variety and harmony of Dryden's numbers; nor had he his various learning, or reasoning faculty, to embellish and diversify his tragedies in rhyme. He soon followed that poet's example, and relinquished his chiming fetters for blank verse, which approaches nearest to the iambic of the ancients. Otway, like Dryden, warmed his genius with the fire of Shakspeare; but, not content with borrowing from his original, he stole whole scenes from Romeo and Juliet, and incorporated them in his Caius Marius: this, indeed, he acknowledges in his prologue. The encomium which he bestows on the old bard, deserves a place amongst those
which

which are accumulated to his honour in the last edition of Johnson and Steevens :

Our Shakspeare wrote, too, in an age as bless'd ;
The happiest poet of his time, and best.

A gracious prince's favour cheer'd his muse,
A constant favour he ne'er fear'd to lose.

Therefore he wrote with fancy unconfin'd,
And thoughts that were immortal as his mind ;
And, from the crop of his luxurious pen,
E'er since, succeeding poets humbly glean.

Though much the most unworthy of the throng,
Our this-day's poet fears he has done him wrong :
Like greedy beggars, that steal sheaves away,
You'll find he has rifled him of half a play.

Amid'st his baser dross you'll see it shine,
Most beautiful, amazing, and divine !

Notwithstanding the merit of such a coalition as Shakspeare and Otway, and the excellent acting of Betterton, Smith, and Mrs. Barry, in the tragic scenes of the play, I believe it chiefly owed its support to Underhill in Sulpitius, and Nokes in the Nurse ; who, in this part, excited such repeated merriment, that he carried the name
of

of Nurse Nokes to his grave, Edmund Smith, in his Elegy on the death of Phillips, has given a diverting picture of this inimitable droll, who shone equally in burlesquing tragedy as in acting comic characters :

So, when Nurse Nokes to act young Ammon tries,
With shambling legs, long chin, and foolish eyes,
With dangling hands he strokes th' imperial robe,
And with a cuckold's air commands the globe.
The pomp and sound the whole buffoon display'd,
And Ammon's son more mirth than Gomez made.

The superior power of pleasing an audience, in Underhill and Nokes, is acknowledged by the author in the epilogue, spoken by Mrs. Barry :

And now for you, who here come wrapp'd in clokes,
Only for love of Underhill and Nurse Nokes.

Otway's quitting the military life is also pointed out in the same epilogue :

But which amongst you is there to be found,
Will take his third day's pawn for fifty pound?

Or,

Or, now he is cashier'd, will fairly venture

To give him ready money for's debenture?

Therefore, when he receiv'd that fatal doom,

This play came forth, in hopes his friends would
come

To help a poor disbanded soldier home.

From these lines, we may candidly and fairly conclude, that Otway's leaving the army was attended with no disgrace.

But the reputation of Otway for pathetic powers was, by the success of his Orphan, justly exalted above all the dramatists of his own and succeeding times. The characters, by being brought nearer to the condition of the audience, more deeply interest their passions than the fate and fortune of persons who are eminently placed above them.

A young lady, destitute of fortune, and who had lost her parents, left, when a child, to the care and protection of a nobleman, the friend of her dead father, is passionately solicited by his two sons, Cas-

talio and Polydore. The pretensions of the elder, unknown to his brother, are founded on honourable love. The younger, confiding in the sincerity of his brother's declaration, that he would never marry Monimia, but strive to gain her for a mistress, is impelled to affront her with his brutal passion, as she rightly terms it; for his address, however justified in the rank days of Charles II. would scarcely now be tolerated in a brothel. During the progress of their courtship, Chamont, the young lady's brother, arrives; and, on the information of an old woman, whom the author's poetical fancy transforms into a witch, he questions his sister on her present situation. The scene is varied with beautiful imagery and affecting passion.—Polydore, the younger brother, by the help of a page, discovers Castalio's treachery; and, not knowing of their marriage, listens, and overhears the appointment

pointment of the new-married pair. By a stratagem, he contrives to impose himself in the dark, on Monimia, for his brother, and enjoys her. The distress, raised in consequence of this, ends in the death of the lady and the two rival brothers.

From a plot so simple, the author has raised pathetic scenes, which, from their first representation to the present day, have melted into tenderness the heart of every spectator. Without degenerating into vulgarity, the language is easy, flowing, and familiar; and yet sufficiently forcible; it is occasionally strengthened by pleasing description and warm imagery. Had it been raised to greater force, by higher exertion of the poet, it would neither have suited the plot nor the characters. That his style was more energetic, in his tragedy of Venice Preserved, must be attributed to the difference of fable and the

persons employed in it. He that delineates in his mind the destruction of a state, or kingdom, will immediately find a more animated style rise to his imagination than that which describes the distresses of a private family.—In Shakspeare, the very idea of a conspiracy fires his thoughts and elevates his language.*

In the character of Acasto, Otway has drawn a portrait of a worthy nobleman, who, retired from court, retains his veneration and loyalty for his royal master.—That the author has given a good picture of courts, and more particularly that of Charles II. I think an attentive reader may see in the description of it given by Acasto, in the second act. After which, the good old man breaks out into a warm encomium of Charles II.

Yes, my aspiring boys,
You shall have business when your master wants you!

* Henry IV. Macbeth, Julius Cæsar.

You

You cannot serve a nobler. I have serv'd him.
 In this old body yet the marks remain
 Of many wounds. *I've, with this tongue, proclaim'd*
His right, ev'n in the face of rank rebellion !
 And, when a foul-mouth'd traitor once profan'd
 His sacred name, with my good sabre drawn,
 Ev'n at the head of all his giddy rout,
 I rush'd, and clove the rebel to the chine !

Of all the noblemen, who, in the reign
 of Charles II. distinguished themselves for
 worth and attachment to their royal mas-
 ter, James Duke of Ormond stands the
 foremost ; and I cannot avoid conjecturing,
 that his character is here shadowed, at
 least part of it, under Acasto. What
 strengthens my opinion is the discourse
 of the two servants, Paulino and Ernesto,
 in the first scene. Paulino, after expres-
 sing his wonder, that Acasto should still
 persist in hating the court, where he was
 born and bred, is informed by Ernesto,
 that he had reason for his disgust :

When, for what he had borne,
 Long and faithful toil, he might have claim'd

Places in honour and employment high ;
 A huffing, shining, flatt'ring, cringing, coward,
 A canker-worm of peace, was rais'd above him.*

That Ormond was displaced from his government of Ireland, where he was beloved by all ranks of people, by the ungrateful Charles, to gratify the worst man in the kingdom, Villiers Duke of Buckingham, is a fact, to which, I think, Otway alludes. It is true, Ormond did not, like Acasto, retire from court, but kept his place of steward of the household ; which office, Charles, who respected virtues, though he wanted the honesty to imitate them, had not the courage to take from them. The King, who was extremely affable, and made it his constant business to please every man with his conversation, when

* In these attributes of a base mind, we see the genuine character of Buckingham ; who, it is believed, formed a treacherous design, by his instrument, Blood, to assassinate this worthy nobleman.

when he went to the levee, saw Ormond always ready to pay his court ; but, by Buckingham's influence, he could neither speak to nor look at him. This behaviour was copied by all who frequented the court, with a view to gain employment or to secure the Minister's favour. But those who had nothing to ask, and went there only to make their bows, formed a circle about Ormond, and listened with great attention to his discourse. It happened one day that the king, struck with the respect paid to his old loyal servant, was willing to break through his forced silence, and converse with him ; but the favourite's presence embarrassed him so much, that Buckingham, in a whisper, said to the king, ' I wish your majesty would resolve me one question : Is the Duke of Ormond out of favour with your Majesty, or is your Majesty out of favour with the Duke of Ormond ? for, of the two, you seem to be in

most confusion.* This good man's opinion of the court may be gathered from what he said to Cary Dillon, afterwards Lord Roscommon. Dillon pressed the duke to use his interest for a suit he had to the king; assuring him, at the same time, that he had no friend at court but God and his lordship: 'Alas! poor Cary,' said the duke, 'thou couldst not have two friends that have less interest at court, or less respect shewn them there.'

I shall conclude what I have to say, on this matter, with an account of Charles's subsequent behaviour to Ormond; which is so remarkable, that, though it confers some little honour on the king, it throws a lustre on the duke's character which nothing can tarnish.

After the king had, for several years, treated the Duke of Ormond with coldness and neglect, on a sudden he invited him

* Carte's Life of Ormond, Vol. II.

him to supper : he treated him with such familiarity and kindness as if nothing had happened, and appointed him once more to the government of Ireland. The next day, at the levee, Charles said to his courtiers : ‘ Yonder comes Ormond ; I have done all I can to disoblige that man, and to make him as discontented as others : *but he will not be disobliged with me ; he will be loyal, in spite of my teeth.*— I must e’en take him in again ; and he is the fittest person to go to Ireland.’

If I am deceived in my conjecture, respecting the application of Acasto’s character to the Duke of Ormond, I shall only have amused my readers with some anecdotes which are not to be found in the general history of this country.

ACT II.

Chamont and the Chaplain.

C H A M O N T.

Nay, but thou art a hypocrite. Is there not one
Of all thy tribe that’s honest in your schools ?

Ye

Ye all live lothesome, servile, sneaking, lives;
Not free enough to practise generous truth,
Though you pretend to teach it to the world.

Men, immersed in luxury and debauchery, as Otway and his brother-poets were in the reign of Charles, could not be very impartial judges of a clergyman's sacred function or character. They had no opportunity to be acquainted with the worthy men of that order; their time was dissipated in places which were unknown even to sober laymen. Otway was the son of a clergyman, who left him for inheritance, as he himself has told us,* nothing but his loyalty; and this alone might surely have prevented his illiberal abuse on the order. But, if ever the clergy of this country deserved esteem and respect, it was during the reign of this abandoned monarch. — Before the restoration of Charles, the church of England had

* In his dedication.

had endured a twenty years persecution ; and, from that fiery trial, came out more pure and bright. Such ornaments of piety and learning can hardly be produced in any period of our history, as at that time shone out with superior lustre.—The names of Wilkins, Cudworth, Barrow, Tillotson, Stillingfleet, Whichcot, Scot, Patrick, Burnet, and Sharp, to whom many more might be added, will justify what I have asserted.

That *boutefeu*, Sir Roger L'Estrange, towards the latter end of Charles's reign, by his inflammatory paper, called the *Observer*, endeavoured to mislead the clergy in general. But such men as I have mentioned were not to be shaken or biaſſed by a hacknied incendiary. The interested and fanatic part of the clergy, and such all churches have, were, indeed, dupes to L'Estrange and their own passions ; but the greater part, to their honour, remained untainted.

Act

Act IV. Scene I.

Acasto, Chamont, Monimia.

A C A S T O.

You talk to me in parables, Chamont.

You may have known that I'm no wordy man,

Fine speeches are the instruments of knaves,

Or fools that use them when they want good sense.

But honesty

Needs no disguise or ornament. ———

Be plain.

Few of our dramatic poets, except Dryden and Congreve, seem to have had any acquaintance with the Greek tragedians: I should otherwise have suspected, that Otway had, in the above lines of Acasto, imitated the following speech, of Polynices to his brother, Eteocles, in the Phœnissæ of Euripides:

Ἀπλὸς ὁ μῦθος τῆς ἀληθείας ἐστίν,

Καὶ ποικίλων δὲ τὰ ἴδιχ' ἐρμενευμάτων·

Ἐχέει

Εχει γαρ αὐτὰ καιρον· ο δ' αδικος λογος,
 Νοσων εν αυτω, φαρμακων δειται σοφων.

The words of truth are simple; justice needs not
 The circling train of wily argument,
 Clear in its proof. Injustice, in itself
 Unsound, requires the medicinal trick
 Of glosing sophistry.

Potter's Euripides.

Act. V. Two last lines.

C H A M O N T.

'Tis thus that heav'n its empire does maintain:
 It may afflict, but man must not complain.

This is but a bad moral deduced from
 the catastrophe of the fable, and borders
 on fatalism. Oedipus, in the conclusion
 of the Phœnissæ, utters the same doc-
 trine:

Αλλα γαρ τι ταυτα θρηνω και ματην οδυρομαι;
 Τας γαρ εκ θεων αναγκας θνηται οντα δει φερειν.

But

But why in vain
Lament I thus and wail, since mortal man
Must bear the hard necessity of fate?

Potter:

The principal original actors, in the Orphan, were—Betterton, Castalio; Williams, Polydore; Smith, Chamont; and Mrs. Barry, Monimia. Cibber has told us, that the Castalio of Betterton was superior to all the performances he had ever seen of the character; though he confessed, at the same time, that he was not so eminent in representing lovers, from person and elocution, as parts which required less softness. Mountfort, a younger man, who succeeded him, being endowed by nature with a handsome person, a most melodious voice, and pleasing address, was, at least to the female part of the audience, which I think best qualified to distinguish, rather nearer to the idea of an accomplished and successful lover. Williams was an actor of merit, but courted the bottle with more vigour than the

the profession of acting. Polydore was formerly so great a favourite with the audience, that, when Powell and he were cast into the two brothers, they contended by lot who should act this approved libertine; and he who obtained the favour, paid for it, as I have been told, with a fine for a sacrifice at the shrine of Bacchus. Smith was an actor of such eminence as to excite the indolent Booth to write his epitaph. He was long the associate of Betterton in the management of the theatre. Mrs. Barry's Monimia seems to have raised that reputation to the height which had been gradually increasing. As Cibber considers this actress to have been far superior to all he had ever known in tragedy, it will not be an idle business to give some account of the methods employed to form so much excellence.

It is said, that Mrs. Barry was the daughter of Edward Barry, Esq. a barrister,*

fter,* who was afterwards called Colonel Barry, from his having raised a regiment, for the service of Charles I. in the civil wars. — The misfortunes arising from this engagement, involved himself and family in such distress, that his children were obliged to make their own fortunes. Lady Davenant, an acquaintance of Sir William Davenant, from her friendship to Colonel Barry, gave his daughter a genteel education. She made her her constant companion, and always visited with her young friend. This early knowledge of polite life was of service to Mrs. Barry, as it gave an ease and grace to her person and behaviour. Above forty years since, I saw, at Mrs. Bracegirdle's house, in Howard-street, a picture of Mrs. Barry, by Kneller, in the same apartments with the portraits of Betterton, Mr. Congreve, and

* History of the Stage, printed for E. Curl, 1741.

and Mrs. Bracegirdle. Mrs. Barry, it appeared from the painting, had not been a great beauty; but her countenance commanded attention, and was extremely expressive. When her friend, Lady Davenant, recommended her to the stage, her pretensions to notice were a good air and manner, and a very strong and pleasing voice. Her ear was bad, and the players found it so extremely difficult to teach her, that they pronounced her incapable of making any progress in acting. Three times, says the historian, of the English stage, she was rejected, and, by the interest of her patroness, reinstated. Cibber speaks only of one discharge.

There was so little expectation of her arriving to any degree of excellence, that several persons of quality, on seeing her fail in attempting a character of some importance, gave their opinion, that she never could be an actress. The Earl of Rochester, who at that time paid his addresses to Mrs. Barry, offered a considerable wa-

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ger, that, in the space of six months, she would become one of the most approved performers of the theatre. The Earl's offer was accepted. From the moment he made this engagement, he renewed his addresses to Mrs. Barry; and, by often conversing with her, found she was mistress of exquisite charms. It has been said, that he fixed his affections on her more strongly than on any other female. Letters, addressed to Madam B—, by the Earl of Rochester, were printed in that sole edition of his poems fit for the public eye, which was printed for J. Tonson in 1716; and are generally said to be the earl's epistolary correspondence with this celebrated actress. In some of them, he speaks with great fondness of a child he had by her, to whom he afterwards left, by will, an annuity of 40l.*

One of the first parts the earl taught his fair

* History of the English Stage, 1741.

fair pupil, was Isabella, the Queen of Hungary, in the Earl of Orrery's tragedy of Mustapha. Mrs. Barry had an excellent understanding, but not a musical ear; so that she could not catch the sounds or emphasis taught her; but fell into a disagreeable tone, the fault of most young stage-adventurers. — To cure her of this defect, Lord Rochester caused her to enter into the meaning of every sentiment; he taught her not only the proper cadence or founding of the voice, but to seize also the passions, and adapt her whole behaviour to the situations of the character. It is said, that, in order to accomplish his intention, besides the many private instructions he gave her, he caused her to rehearse the part no less than thirty times upon the stage, and of these, about twelve times in the dress in which she was to play.

The first night she acted this part, Rochester brought the King, the Duke of York, and his Dutcheſs, to the play. Her look of distress, and her whole deportment,

before she spoke, greatly prejudiced the audience in her favour: but, when she uttered the following words to the Cardinal, ———

My lord, my sorrow seeks not your relief;

You are not fit to judge a mother's grief;

You have no child for an untimely grave,

Nor can you lose what I desire to save. ———

Here they saw majesty distressed; and a widowed queen, insulted by her subjects, feeling all that an afflicted mother could suffer, and a stern counsellor's forcing her to yield her only son, to be sacrificed to the enemy, to save themselves and city. The several conflicting passions were so feelingly touched by her, that the theatre resounded with loud applause. The Duchess of York was so pleased with Mrs. Barry, that she made her a present of her wedding suit; from her she learned, soon afterwards, to improve in the English language; and, when Queen of England,

it

it is said, she gave her her coronation-robes, to act Queen Elizabeth, in the Earl of Essex. In this wretched tragedy, her action was so truly excellent, that, in spite of the worst language that an author can possibly write, she revived Elizabeth, the great idol of her people.

'To say, in the common language, that Elizabeth loved her people, is talking idly,' says Voltaire; 'for what prince ever loved the people?' However, she certainly had the art to make them believe so; for she governed them above forty years, to their own happiness and satisfaction, and the approbation of all Europe. Mrs. Barry perfectly understood the character of this princess; she pronounced

What means my giving people?

with such exquisite skill, that it never failed to draw the approving notice of the audience. About fifty years since, I saw her great imitator and admired pupil, Mrs.

P 3

Porter,

Porter, in this character, and Elizabeth in the Albion Queens. In both she acquitted herself to the admiration of the audience; though all who had remembered Mrs. Barry, pronounced her very inferior to her teacher. She was so lame, that, during the whole play, she was obliged to make use of a crutched cane, which she contrived to use with advantage, especially in that scene of the Albion Queens, where Elizabeth, with wonderful dissimulation and royal hypocrisy, seems unwilling to sign the unfortunate Mary's death-warrant: in the assumed agitation of her mind during the feigned conflict, and when she pronounced the following words——

Quick! give my roving thoughts no time for reason;
But thou, successful devil, put the pen
Into my hand, and hell into my bosom!——

And after signing the warrant——

There, there it is——

Mrs. Porter, with her cane, struck the stage with such vehemence, that the audience reiterated loud applause.

But

But Mrs. Barry was mistress of all the passions of the mind: love, joy, grief, rage, tenderness, and jealousy, were all represented by her with equal skill and equal effect. In the play of the Orphan, when, on leaving Castalio, in the last act, she burst out into that affecting exclamation, 'O poor Castalio!' she never failed to shed tears herself, nor was it possible for the audience to refrain from correspondent lamentation. Betterton bore this testimony to the perfection of this eminent actress that she so greatly exerted her art in an indifferent character, that her acting had given success to plays that would disgust the most patient reader.— When she accepted a part, she consulted the author concerning his intention in every scene. The last new character she acted was Phædra, in Edmund Smith's tragedy of —Phædra and Hippolytus. Though Mrs. Oldfield and the author fell out concerning some particular lines in the

P 4 part

part of Ismena, Mrs. Barry and he were in perfect harmony.

Cibber relates, in his Apology, that Mrs. Barry died of a fever, in the latter part of Queen Anne's reign; and judges, by this expression, in her last delirium,—
 ‘Ha! ha! and so they make us lords by dozens!’—that it was about the time when twelve peers were created at once. The date of her epitaph, at Acton, is fixed two years after this extraordinary promotion.* An actress, who was in London when Mrs. Barry died, assured me,

* The following epitaph is in the church-yard of Acton:

Near this place

Lies the body of Elizabeth Barry,

Of the parish of St. Mary Le Savoy;

Who departed this life the 7th of November, 1713

Aged 55 years.

me, many years since, that her death was owing to the bite of a favourite lap-dog, who, unknown to her, had been seized with madness.

I have dwelt the longer on Mrs. Barry, on account of her superior excellence. — Gibber, writing in the year 1738, declared he had seen nothing equal to her.

The character of Chamont had not engaged the attention of very eminent actors. The elder Mills, many years before his death, was unqualified for a part which required a younger man, with much variety of passion, and quick transition from anger to calmness, and from calmness to returning rage. Quin was utterly unfit for that, or any other part of the play, except Acasto; his judgment directed him to quit Chamont many years before he left the stage.

The gay libertine air which Booth gave to Polydore, has not been equalled since; though Walker, his pupil, was
more

more than a tolerable copy of his master. The manners of the times are so utterly changed, that the gross address and brutal courtship of the character must now be softened into a more delicate sense of what is due to a young lady of honour.

The Castalio of Wilks was long and justly admired. His graceful address in the first act, his warm enjoyment of Monimia's reconciliation to him in the second, his rage and resentment in the third and fourth acts; but, above all, his tenderness and distress in the fine interview with Monimia in the fifth act, a love-scene as truly affecting as any to be found in tragedy, justly entitled him to the spectators' most generous approbation. And yet those who can remember Wilks and Barry, will own, that the latter much excelled the former. In expressing the blended passions of love, tenderness, and grief, Barry was unrivalled. In the *Memoirs of Mr. Garrick's Life*, I have said
so

so much of his justly-admired Chamont, that I can add nothing to it here. To pass by, with neglect, the Monimia of Mrs. Porter, would be unjust to the merits of an excellent actress.—To those who had not seen Mrs. Barry, notwithstanding her unharmonious voice, she appeared inimitable. This actress concealed the art of her profession so skilfully, that she seemed to realise the passions, and to be inspired with the various situations of character.

Mrs. Cibber's Monimia many will call to mind with pleasure, and do justice to the fine expression and feeling of that impassioned performer. The public saw, I believe, only during two winters, with uncommon pleasure, in the tragedy of the Orphan, a Garrick, a Barry, and a Cibber.

CHAPTER XLI.

Plot of Venice Preserved.—*Narrative of St. Real and the tragedy compared.*—*Bedamar and the Duke d'Offuna.*—*Shakspeare's Richard III.*—*Euripides.*—*Pierre and Jaffier.*—*History of a Grecian lady.*—*Particular time when Venice Preserved was acted.*—*Duke of York.*—*Oates, Bedloe, &c.*—*Popish Plot.*—*Otway a loyalist.*—*Scenes of Venice Preserved hurt by ribaldry.*—*Lord Shaftesbury.*—*Antonio and Renault.*—*Otway's enemies described.*—*Whigs and Tories.*—*The senate of Venice and the house of commons.*—*Otway's character in Jaffier.*—*First act of the play.*—*Belvidera's excellence.*—*Gay's parody.*—*Pierre's artifice.*—*Conspirators.*—*Renault and Elliot.*—*Belvidera and the Conspirators.*—*Suspicious entertained against Jaffier.*—*His anxiety and distress.*—*Art of the Poet.*—*Fate of Pierre; and Jaffier.*—*Acquilina and Antonio.*

Wonder-

Wonderful pathos of the last act.---Atheist,
the last play of Otway.--His unhappy cir-
cumstances.---Cause assigned.---Common ac-
count of Otway's death;---contradicted by
Dr. Warton.---True cause of Dryden's en-
vy to Otway.---Death, the great destroyer
of envy.---Original actors in Venice Pre-
served.---Betterton and Smith.---Mrs. Bar-
ry.---Mr. Wilks and Mrs. Rogers.---Mills
in Pierre.---Booth and Wilks.---Colley Cib-
ber.---Harry Carey.---Booth's want of can-
dour.---Mrs. Porter, Ryan, Quin, and
Mrs. Seymour.---Garrick resigns Pierre for
Jaffier.---Mossop's Pierre.---An anecdote.--
Mrs. Cibber.---Mrs. Siddons.---Mrs. Yates.
Mrs. Crawford, and Miss Young.---Mr.
Brereton.---Mr. Bensley.

THE fable of Venice Preserved af-
forded a larger field for the exer-
tion of Otway's abilities than the cata-
strophe of an unhappy marriage in a pri-
vate family. A plot, formed for the de-
struction

struction of a state, is a subject, I have already observed, that would rouse the genius of any writer.

The story is taken from St. Real's Conspiracy of the Marquis de Bedamar and the Duke d'Offuna against the Republic of Venice. The narrative of St. Real is skilfully written; but is by no means superior to the English tragedy, as Voltaire presumptuously asserts. In the history, you have some characters strongly marked and well delineated; more especially of that extraordinary man, the Marquis of Bedamar, the most accomplished politician then living; you have likewise a good outline of the most remarkable conspirators, particularly Pierre and Renault. But can we compare a bare narrative with the animating dialogues of Pierre and Jaffier, and the heart-felt scenes of anguish between the lovely distressed Belvidera and her almost distracted husband. In St. Real, Jaffier becomes a conspira-

to

tor against the state of Venice, in whose military service he was employed, from the hopes of plunder, and his attachment to Pierre, his friend. In the tragedy, he is driven to the utmost distress, with a wife whom he tenderly loves, by a cruel father-in-law; and, though nothing can justify treason, yet surely the being surprised into a conspiracy by extreme want, and the insidious arts of a man he esteems to be a friend, exhibits motives less sordid than the other. St. Real's account of the conspiracy resembles a gloomy representation of a storm, interspersed with flashes of lightning, which serve to make the picture more terrible and deformed.

The scenes of conflicting passions, animated by interesting situations of character, render Venice Preserved a grand historical painting, worthy the pencil of the most accomplished artist.

The conduct of the plot has been highly censured by the critics; not altogether,

I am

I am afraid, without cause. Something may yet be advanced in our author's defence: the hero of the piece, they say, is a villain; and so is Richard the Third, in the tragedy of that name; but the use Shakspeare has made of his actions and character has fixed this piece forever on the English stage. The answer which Euripides gave to one who censured him for bringing on the stage Ixion, who was a wicked blasphemer, may serve for Otway: 'It is true (said the Greek poet) I have exhibited a man talking profanely; but, remember, for that crime I have nailed him to a cross.' The English poet may alledge, in his behalf, 'I have adorned Pierre with sentiments which would become a better man; I have made him

' A fine, gay, bold-fac'd, villain:

' But at last I have brought him to the wheel; from which he escapes only by a milder death, the stab of a friend.'

Neither

Neither Pierre nor Jaffier, according to St. Real, were Venetians. The first was, by birth, a Norman ; by profession, a corsair ; one who had given proofs of his knowledge of sea-affairs, and had made a large fortune by his courage in attacking, and afterwards plundering, ships in the Mediterranean. Jaffier was of Provence, and principally known as the particular friend of Pierre. From this connection, and by marrying him to a daughter of a Venetian senator, the poet has worked up the plot of his play. Venice is saved, in Otway, by the resistless charms and pressing remonstrances of a virtuous woman. In St. Real, a female, from the spirit of revenge, joins in a plot to massacre a whole people. A Grecian lady of a noble family, born in one of the islands of the Archipelago, was seduced to give up her honour, by the governor of the isle, under a promise of immense riches. The father of the lady, on his soliciting the seducer to perform his compact, was basely murdered

by him for his importunity. The daughter immediately, with all her effects, set sail for Venice. She laid her case before the senate, and petitioned for justice. They turned a deaf ear to her remonstrances; and she, having spent her little all in vain attendance upon the senate, was reduced to the necessity of repairing her loss by her beauty. No resentment can be more violent than that of persons nobly born, when driven by the hand of power to gain subsistence by means unworthy of their rank. This is the lady whom Otway calls, in the play, *Acquilina*. Otway might have made a different use of this character; he might, perhaps, have wrought some interesting situations from the contrast of the two females.

The second title of the play, the *Plot Discovered*, was given to it in allusion to that which is called the *Popish Plot*, which had raged when this play was represented. The particular time when *Venice Preserved* was first acted,

acted, is fixed by the author in his epilogue, speaking of James Duke of York :

With indignation, then, let each brave heart
Rouse and unite to take his injur'd part ;
Till royal love and goodness call him home,
And songs of triumph wait him as he come.

The duke was then in Scotland, whence he returned to England in March, 1682. From the detested character of Oates, Bedloe, and others, the witnesses employed to authenticate that vile combination against the public quiet, called the Popish Plot, it has been questioned whether such a conjuration ever existed ; though few will deny, that, during the greatest part of Charles's reign, and the whole of that of his brother James, there was a formed conspiracy to subvert the religion and constitution of the kingdom. Hume himself brings testimony to this. Otway, though not rewarded for his attachment to the court, was a very staunch loyalist. Many

Q 2 passages,

passages, from this tragedy and Caius Marius, may be alledged in proof; and indeed, such was his zeal against the whigs, that he contaminated his Venice Preserved with the most indecent ribaldry, from no other view than to ridicule the character of Antony Ashley Cooper, first Earl of Shaftesbury. Antonio, the foolish speech-maker, the lover of Acquilina, in the play, is made to represent this great statesman; and, when Leigh and Mrs. Curre performed the parts of doting cully and rampant courtesan, the applause was as loud as the triumphant tories, for so they were at that time, could bestow. But the author knew too well, that the audience could not be so far imposed on as to imagine there was any resemblance, except, perhaps, that which he imputes to him of lasciviousness, between his foolish Antonio and Shaftesbury; and therefore, in his prologue, he seems to hint, that he intended the part of Renault, as well as Antonio, for our great politician:

Here

Here is a traitor that is very old,
 Turbulent, subtle, mischievous, and bold;
 Bloody, revengeful; and, to crown his part,
 Loves fumbling with a wench with all his heart;
 Till, after having many changes pass'd,
 In spite of age, thank heaven! is hang'd at last.
 Next is a senator that keeps a whore;
 In Venice none a higher office bore;
 To lewdness every night the letcher ran:
 Shew me, all London, such another man;
 Match him at Mother Creswell's, if you can.

Some allusion to the search made in the Earl of Shaftesbury's apartments for treasonable papers, seems here intended. The report given out was, that a female friend of his lordship was discovered under his bed, or in a closet.

The poet, in his epilogue, takes notice of certain malicious enemies his loyalty had provoked; but the lines are rendered so obscure, by length of time, that nothing certain can be discovered from them:

And, though against him causeless hatred rise, }
 And daily, where he goes of late, he spies }
 The scowls of fullen and revengeful eyes,
 'Tis what he knows with much contempt to bear;
 He serves a cause too good to let him fear.
 He fears no poison from an incens'd drab;
 No ruffian's five-foot sword nor rascal's stab;
 Nor any other shares of mischief laid: —
 Not a Rose-alley cudgel-ambuscade.

In the last line, Otway perhaps alludes to a sound beating which Dryden underwent, from two unknown persons, much about this time. During the Popish Plot, and while the exclusion-bill was depending, the whigs and tories seemed to have been in a state of political insanity; the latter espousing openly the cause of arbitrary power, while the former were little less than staunch advocates for democracy. On the side of loyalty were listed the poets of genius: Dryden, Lee, and Otway, were an overmatch for Shadwell, Settle, and others. The audiences, divided

vided in political principles, fell often into riot and tumult. One side of the theatre loudly applauded what the other with violence exploded. The senate of Venice was an excellent stalking-horse, whence Otway took his aim at the house of commons. The following part of Pierre's speech, in the first act, was levelled at the abuse of power, in that assembly, by the frequent and unjust imprisonment of persons who were supposed to be concerned in the Popish Plot :

————— To see our senators
 Cheat the deluded people with a show
 Of liberty. —————
 They say, by them our hands are free from fetters
 Yet whom they please they put in basest bonds :
 Bring whom they please to infamy and ruin. ———
 All that bear this are villains ! and I one,
 Not to rouse up at the great call of nature,
 And check the growth of these domestic spoilers,
 Who make us slaves, and tell us 'tis our charter !

Q 4

These

These lines were heard by the majority of the audience with rapture and applause, and applied as the author intended. But, amidst all his efforts to support the royal cause, poor Otway was ever in distress. Some passages in the first and second act, we can justly apply to the poet himself.—In the opening of the play, he thus complains to his father-in-law, Priuli;

————— For I *have* known
The luscious sweets of plenty; every night
Have slept with soft content about my head,
And never wak'd but to a joyful morning:
Yet now must fall, like a full ear of corn,
Whose blossom scap'd, yet's wither'd in the rip'ning.

— And farther, in the same act, still more pathetically:

————— Tell me why, good heaven!
Thou mad'st me what I am? with all the spirit,
Aspiring thoughts, and elegant desires,
That fill the happiest man? Ah! rather why
Did'st

Did'st thou not form me sordid as my fate ;
Base-minded, dull, and fit to carry burdens?
Why have I sense to know the curse that's on me!

The fable is conducted with art. The exposition, or, as the learned term it, the protasis of the plot, is exceedingly happy. In the first scene, between Jaffier and Priuli, Jaffier pathetically describes his own and Belvidera's distressful situation; the noble manner by which he gained her affection, by plunging into the deep to save her life at the hazard of his own, with other corresponding incidents, are described in terms most lively and affecting. Pierre's arrival brings fresh affliction and distress to the unhappy Jaffier; the pillage of his house, by the implements of legal power, is painted in the most aggravating terms, and described as an action of wanton brutality. The speaker closes his invective with a beautiful portrait of the wretched Belvidera;
and

and this the author artfully heightens with all the force of animated expression, blended with pathetic touches, to increase the anguish of the unhappy husband, and prepare his mind to entertain the most desperate councils. The act is closed with a most affecting scene between the unfortunate pair. The panegyric on the beautiful part of the creation is highly finished, by an author whose whole soul seems to have been made up of love and friendship. The conjugal affection of Belvidera, in circumstances of the most trying nature, is the boast of the English stage; nor can we find any thing equal to it, except in the *Alcestis* of Euripides.

Gay, in his farce of *What d'ye call it*, has parodied one or two speeches of this affecting dialogue :

J A F F I E R.

Can'st thou bear cold and hunger ? &c.

F I L-

F I L B E R T.

Can'st thou bear hunger, can'st thou march and toil?

B E L V I D E R A.

Though the bare earth be all our resting place,
Its roots our food, some clift our habitation,
I'll make this arm a pillow for thy head ;
And, as thou fighting liest, and swell'd with sorrow,
Creep to thy bosom, pour the balm of love
Into thy soul, and kifs thee to thy rest ;
Then praise our God, and watch thee till the morning,

K I T T Y C A R R O T.

Yes, yes, my Thomas, we will go together ;
Beyond the seas together we will go ;
In camps together, as in harvest, glow.
This arm shall be a bolster for thy head ;
I'll fetch clean straw to make my soldier's bed ;
There, while thou sleep'st, my apron o'er thee hold,
Or with it patch the tent against the cold.

The difference between parody and burlesque is here exemplified. There is nothing in Kitty Carrot's speech that can move laughter. The situations are similar ;

fimilar ; but, in rank and education, the persons are different, and consequently their language.

The strange mixture of absurd and obscene interviews, between the old doting senator and his mistress, with the main plot, has now deprived the play of its proper connection of business. The fable is too much hurried on, the scenes are broken, and the time shortened, in many interesting situations, from the necessity of expunging what was written to please a court-faction, but was become, in process of time, odious and disgusting. To dwell upon such beauties as cannot but occur to every reader of *Venice Preserved*, would be impertinent. I shall just take notice of some remarkables in style, and of some deviations of the poet from St. Real's history of the conspiracy. In the first scene of the second act, between Jaffier and Pierre, we cannot avoid calling to mind that colloquial language so familiar to Shakspeare and
other

other old dramatists: Pierre, putting a purse into his friend's hand, says, —

—— Here's money to buy pins ;

Marriage is chargeable.

The other replies, ——

—— I but half wish'd to see

The devil, and he's here already. Well !

What must this buy ? — rebellion ! murder ! treason !

Tell me which way I must be damn'd for this !

Without going into the usual method of censuring the style of our modern tragedies, I believe every man will agree with me, that the language of Otway and Southerne cannot be mended or improved ; — through them nature speaks, and speaks with equal freedom and force.

Renault's character, as a conspirator of eminence, and in great trust with the Spanish ambassador, is drawn faithfully from St. Real. Why Otway should involve Eliot, his countryman, in this conspiracy, I can see no cause, except his wantonly branding the English with the charge of treason. But the poet found no warrant
for

for this in his original. St. Real says, indeed, that Elliot was an experienced sea-officer in the service of Spain; and no otherwise concerned in the plot than as he was employed by the Duke d'Offuna to command a fleet, which was to second the enterprize of Bedamar against the Republic of Venice. One of the bravest and worthiest of men has made the name of Elliot dear to every lover of his country, dear to all mankind; and it is a pleasure to wipe away a disgrace fixed on that honoured name by the inadvertence or folly of the poet.

The introducing an amiable and delicate female amongst a gang of desperate paricides, must shock the spectator; and, from that circumstance, he may divine the discovery of the plot. The attempt of Renault to violate the chastity of Belvidera, rouses Jaffier from that state of mind in which his mistaken friendship for Pierre had plunged him. The sanguinary and
brutal

brutal charge of Renault, which is partly copied from the history, is heard by Pierre with approbation and pleasure, but by Jaffier with horror and detestation. In the history, as well as the tragedy, Renault observes the countenance and distress of Jaffier, during his positive orders to spare neither sex nor age. He communicates his suspicions to Pierre, who, with some difficulty, prevails upon him not to kill his friend on suspicion; and lays before him, with great earnestness, the apprehended consequences of such an act. The senate, on hearing that d'Offuna's fleet was at sea, ordered Pierre to sail immediately, with some ships of war, to watch their motions. To this single circumstance, perhaps, Venice owed her safety; for Jaffier, being separated from his friend, who had kept a watchful eye over his conduct, had now full leisure to indulge his melancholy reflections, and to give way, undisturbed, to the motions of humanity arising in his breast.

breast. The conflict of his mind was great. His imagination painted to him all the horrors of a city surprised and taken by storm, subjected to the most shocking of disasters: he heard, he thought, the cries of children trodden under feet, the groans of old men whose throats were devoted to the sword, and the screams of virgins and matrons.* So strongly was his imagination impressed with terror, that he saw nothing but palaces tumbling down, churches in flames, and the most holy places violated with blood and slaughter.

Venice, the sad and deplorable Venice, was continually before his eyes. On the other hand, he reflected how infamous it was to break through his most solemn engagements, and betray his friends. And such friends! men of intrepidity, equal to the discharge of every office in the cabinet
or

* St. Real.

or the field. And what, alas! will be their punishment? the most excruciating which the wit of the most arbitrary tyrants could possibly invent! The very prisons of Venice were more calculated to shake the courage of the stoutest man than the capital punishments of other nations. These last reflections kept him in suspense for a time; and balanced the afflicting sensations which the idea of Venice destroyed had excited. His curiosity to see the ceremony of the doge's wedding the Adriatic, which preceded the day intended for the execution of the conspiracy, at length determined his wavering mind. The sight, of all Venice assembled in tranquillity to enjoy this great day of festivity, filled Jaffier with the tenderest and most insupportable emotions; he could not endure the thought of such a number of happy people being on a sudden plunged into the deepest gulph of misery and destruction.

The reader, by comparing these circumstances, borrowed from the narrative, will perceive with how much art the poet has woven them into his plot, to produce dramatic effect. All the affecting motives, which prevail on the most determined man to quit his purpose, are put into the mouth of Belvidera. The exacting an oath from the senate, to spare the lives of twenty-two conspirators, is likewise taken from St. Real. The passionate and pathetic scenes which follow, and the rest of the plot, except the senate's violating their oaths of pardon, owe their existence to the poet's invention. The fate of Pierre is thus related by the historian.—Two persons of trust were sent on board the vessel which Pierre commanded; who, under pretence of communicating fresh orders from the senate, drew him into a private conference, in the midst of which they plunged their pogniards into his bosom, and afterwards caused his body to be thrown into the sea.

Jaffier,

Jaffier, inconsolable for the loss of his friend, with great bitterness reproached the senate with their perfidy. They obliged him to take from them 3000 ducats, and banished him their territories. Breathing nothing but revenge, he soon after joined some of the conspirators, who were raising disturbances in Brescia, and was taken fighting manfully, endeavouring to sell his life as dear as he could. He was brought to Venice, and drowned by order of the State.

The last act, in pathetic distress, is equal to any of the former. After Belvidera has wrought her father to compassion, and to a promise of saving the lives of the conspirators, an interview between Acquilina and Antonio takes place, which fills up the time till Jaffier has been informed that Priuli had been unsuccessful; but the obscene trash of the dialogue has long rendered it unfit for representation, and it is now entirely left out. By these means, the scene is greatly precipitated. I re-

member that, about fifty years since, when I saw *Venice Preserved* at Covent-garden, so much of Antonio's character was retained, as gave time to carry on the plot with some probability; and Hippisley, in a soliloquy, where he displays the ridiculous eloquence of the character, entertained the audience long enough for preserving the continuity of the scenes. At present, the immediate meeting of Belvidera and Jaffier, after her interview with Priuli, is too sudden and abrupt.

It is impossible to read, much less to see represented on the stage, the parting-scene between the husband and wife, without the deepest affliction. This man had more power over the heart than any writer of our nation, except, perhaps, Richardson. The affright poor Belvidera is thrown into by Jaffier's drawing his dagger, is succeeded by the bell which announces the execution of Pierre; and makes a fine picture of pity, distress, and terror!

Quin

Quin talked once of restoring the long-omitted scene of Pierre with the priest, which followed that of Jaffier and Belvidera; but his better reflections taught him to pay respect to decency and the sacred order. The genius of the poet shines out to the last. The laugh of Pierre, interrupted by the agonizing groan, with the madness of Belvidera, conclude this master-piece of Otway.

To Barry's good taste we owe the absence of the ghosts of Jaffier and Pierre. Belvidera sees her husband and his friend only in her distracted mind.

Otway's last play was the Atheist, a comedy of loose intrigue and dissolute manners. Beaugard's father seems to be copied from Dryden's Father Aldo, in his Limberham. This play was acted, by the principal comedians of the united companies, about a few months before the death of the author, and is totally

unworthy of him ; the same, I am afraid, must be said of all his comedies. Garrick, above thirty years since, revived his *Soldier's Fortune* ; but so changed were the manners of the times, that the actors, with Woodward at their head, were severely treated by the audience.

The great reputation which Otway gained by his *Venice Preserved*, did not, it seems, mend his fortune. By his dedications to Lord Dorset, we are assured of that nobleman's great generosity to him.—Otway was, it seems, in Edmund Curl's case, who could not get daily bread without daily books ; for he told his patron, that his daily bread depended on his daily business.* He had many patrons ; and, amongst the rest, James Duke of York, who was remarkable for his
firm.

* Dedication of Friendship in Fashion.

firmness to those who were attached to his interest. I am afraid we must attribute great part of his misfortunes to the dissolute manners of the times; by the strong current of which, a man of an easy thoughtless disposition, and strongly addicted to social pleasures, is borne along insensibly. In a life of our author, published with his works, about forty years since, the biographer tells us a melancholy story of his extreme poverty; of his being reduced to the necessity of borrowing a shilling, to satisfy the cravings of his appetite, from a gentleman unknown to him; who being shocked and surprised at the unexpected distress of the author of *Venice Preserved*, put into his hand a guinea; and that Otway was choaked with a piece of bread which he immediately purchased. The day of his death, and place where he died, are fixed

to the 14th of April, 1685, at a public-house on Tower-hill.

But all lovers of genius will think themselves indebted to Dr. Warton; who, from the papers of Dr. Spence, has proved the afflicting tale to be a fiction or misinformation. Otway owed his death to an act of generous friendship. A friend of his had received a very gross affront; the injurious person soon after withdrew to some part of the continent. Otway pursued him to demand satisfaction; in his return home, he was seized with a cold, which ended in a distemper that put a period to his life.*

Our author, while living, met with many enemies; of whom, in his dedications, prefaces, and prologues, he frequently complains. The singular merit of his two best pieces was, in my opinion,

* Warton's Observations on Pope, Vol. II.

the capital fault of which he was guilty, and not to be pardoned by his rivals. It is said, that Dryden disliked him on account of his friendship for Tom Shadwell: that, indeed, could not be a recommendation to the laureat; but the involuntary tears which were shed at his *Orphan* and *Venice Preserved*, were the criminals that made him hateful to Dryden, whose scenes were never honoured with so heart-felt an approbation. This he never forgave till the great subduer of envy had erased his name from the number of the living. *When the wolf is full*, says Ben Jonson, *he howls**. The expression is coarse; but, I fear, the application is too just. When Otway was in his grave, Dryden spoke of him with tenderness, and lamented that he had not known him in an earlier period of his life.

He

* *Sejanus*, Act II.

He then, and I believe not till then, acknowledged his superior power in touching the heart.* It is to the credit of Otway and Shadwell, that the being of different parties caused no interruption to their friendship.

A wretched tragedy, called Heroic Friendship, was printed in 1719. The editor had the assurance to assert that it was written by Otway; the public saw at once that it was an impudent forgery. The MS. was not in his hand-writing, nor was there in the composition a ray of genius.

The two principal characters of Venice Preserved, Jaffier and Pierre, by Betterton and Smith, were much admired and applauded. Tendernefs, friendship, and love, conflicting with rage, terror, and remorse, were painted with the liveliest colours,

* Dryden's preface to his Translation of Frefnoy's Art of Painting.

colours, and shewn in the most striking attitudes, by the accomplished Betterton. Smith's person was commanding; and the spectators justified, by applause, the propriety of that line where he calls himself —

A fine, gay, bold-fac'd villain, as thou see'st me,

And Bedamar's compliment :

The poets, who first feign'd a god of war,
Sure prophecy'd of thee !

The figure of the actor should ever, if possible, justify the poet's description of the character. Garrick, who had ventured to act Pierre against Delane's Jafier, refused the same part with Barry : 'I will not (says Roscius) bully the monument.' — The great Mrs. Barry's Belvidera was one of those parts which obtained for her, as Downs says, the name of *famous Madam Barry*. The characters, which,

which, this writer says, no man could see her act without being most tenderly affected, were Monimia, Belvidera, and Isabella in the Fatal Marriage. To her supreme excellence, in these and other parts, she owed a distinction unknown before to any comedian, a benefit-night, which she alone enjoyed for several years; nor do I find, that even Betterton had that mark of public favour, till a year or two before his death.

About the year 1706, Wilks was cast into the part of Jaffier; Mills, Pierre; and Mrs. Rogers, Belvidera. This actress, after standing out a long siege of amorous courtship from Wilks, to save his life, as Cibber has it, she at length yielded up the fortress. The issue of their loves was a daughter, afterwards married to Ch. Bullock, by approbation of Wilks. A gentleman who published the life of Wilks soon after his decease, gives us some odd anecdotes of the consequences arising from the

the lover's infidelity. The lady's resentment was wrought up to such a degree, that, when they acted together the parts of Jaffier and Belvidera, from their close embraces she left visible and bloody marks of her jealous resentment. This, however painful to Wilks, was sport to the audience; the play was, for this reason frequented much. To behold this strange perversion of courtship, where love was turned into spite, and jealous rage took place of conjugal embraces, brought crowds of curious spectators.

Mills acted Pierre so much to the taste of the public, that the applause bestowed on him in this part, exceeded all that was given to his best efforts in every thing else. The actors joined their voices to that of the public: I confess, I never saw Mills in Pierre without a great degree of approbation. Why he and Quin wore a white hat in this part I could not learn.

The

The politics of the theatre stand upon the same basis as those of a superior community. Interest and ambition equally occupy the inmates of a theatre and a court. The following anecdote is a picture of man at large.

Some time after Booth, by the interest of Lord Bolingbroke, had obtained a share in the patent at Drury-lane; by putting himself into the part of Pierre, this eminent tragedian imagined he should acquire reputation and applause, eclipse the performance of Mills, and strengthen the play; and perhaps revenge the affront Wilks had given him, by putting Mills constantly over his head, when in his power. One day, after rehearsal, he took an opportunity, in the presence of Cibber, to propose this plan of giving a new vigour to *Venice Preserved*. Wilks was so far from relishing the proposal, that he threw down his part of *Jaffier* in a rage,
and

and solemnly protested he would never act it again. Perhaps he imagined Booth would bear away the general applause; perhaps, in the warmth of his temper, he thought that a blow was aimed at him and his friend, Mills, at the same time. But why should we not rather attribute his conduct to a more generous motive? Mills was an honest man, and his valued friend; the depriving him of a character in which he constantly gained the favour of the people, he might reasonably conjecture, would lower his merit, and lessen him in his own-esteem. Booth, however vexed and disappointed, like an able politician, suppressed his anger, and submitted to act the part of Jaffier. He knew that Cibber would espouse the cause of Wilks on all occasions; for, however Colley may complain, in his Apology, of Wilks's fire and impetuosity, he in general was Cibber's great admirer; he supported him

ON

on all occasions, where his own passion or interest did not interpose; nay, he deprived the inoffensive Harry Carey of the liberty of the scenes, because he had, in common with others, made merry with Cibber in a song, on his being appointed poet laureat; saying at the same time, he was surpris'd at his impertinence, in behaving so improperly to *to a man of such great merit.*

During Booth's inability to act, which lasted from 1729 till his death, in 1733, Wilks was called upon to play two of his parts—Jaffier, and Lord Hastings in Jane Shore. Booth was, at times, in all other respects except his power to go on the stage, in good health, and went among the players for his amusement. His curiosity drew him to the play-house on the nights when Wilks acted these characters, in which himself had appeared with uncommon lustre. All the world admired Wilks, except

except his brother-manager : amidst the repeated bursts of applause which he exerted, Booth alone continued silent.

If these two anecdotes are worth perusal, the reader owes them to Benjamin Victor, who, many years since, related them to me.

Mrs. Porter, I have said, was the excellent scholar of Mrs. Barry. From the time this great actress quitted the stage, till the year 1732, Mrs. Porter, as far as I can learn, represented the part of Belvidera, and never failed deeply to affect every audience. Booth was no admirer of Oldfield's tragedy, but was in raptures with Porter in the scenes of Belvidera. Every situation of this amiable character this actress filled with all the fine passion which the tenderest writer could inspire. She exceeded particularly in her agony, when forced from Jaffier, in the second act, and in the madness of the last.

In begging another embrace from Jaf-
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fier, when he is about to leave her for ever, her distress and anguish of mind were not to be described :

J A F F I E R.

This—and no more. [Kissing her.]

B E L V I D E R A.

———— Another, sure another !

For that poor little one you've ta'en such care of
I'll give't him, truly !

Nor should I forget her delicate manner of
putting him in mind of his appointment in
the third act : ———

Remember twelve !

At the theatre of Lincoln's-inn-fields,
and afterwards at Covent-garden, Venice
Preserved was kept in reputation by Ryan in
Jaffier, Quin in Pierre, and Mrs. Seymour
in Belvidera, who was succeeded by Mrs.
Hallam. ——— These actors supported this
favourite play for many years, against their
powerful rivals of Drury-lane. Ryan was,
I believe, in Jaffier, a copier of Powel,
whose

whose manner he caught when very young; an actor whom his master, Rich, preferred to all he had ever seen. Quin acted Pierre as he supposed Booth would have done. In displaying the ardour of the brave and gallant soldier, in the first scenes, he was not so happy as in uttering his resentment of Jaffier's treachery, in the fourth act.

Mrs. Seymour felt all the passions, and expressed them agreeably to their various powers; and in conformity to the action of the drama. In person she was tall and well made, but grew large as she advanced in life; her countenance was expressive, and her voice pleasing and flexible. Her Belvidera was amongst those characters that contributed to raise her reputation. — Mr. Ryan was so strongly prejudiced in the opinion of Mrs. Seymour's merit, that, in a conversation I once had with him at

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* Some idea of her features may be seen in Vertue's frontispiece to the tragedy of Mariamne.

the Bedford coffee-house, he assured me he thought her superior to all the actresses he had ever seen. Though we should think him too partial, in preferring Mrs. Seymour to Mrs. Oldfield and Mrs. Porter, yet surely she must have had a large share of merit to engage his judgment so strongly in her favour.

Mr. Garrick, when fixed in the management of Drury-lane, for reasons I have already adduced, resigned *Pierre*, in which part his fire and spirit were not equally supported by grandeur and dignity of person, for *Jaffier*, which he acted with great and deserved approbation many years. The temporary frenzy with which *Jaffier* is seized, in the fourth act, on fancying that he saw his friend on the rack, has not since been equalled, nor perhaps ever will :.

_____ He groans ;

Hark how he groans ! his screams are in my ears
Already ! See, they've fix'd him on the wheel !
And now they tear him !—Murder !—Perjur'd senate !
Murder !—_____

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The enthusiastic power of Garrick presented this dreadful image to the audience with such astonishing force, that they trembled at the imaginary picture. In all the softer scenes of domestic woe, conjugal tenderness, and agonizing distress, Barry, it must be owned, was Garrick's master.

Mossop's Pierre should not be forgotten; his fine full-toned voice, and strong expression of sentiment, gave uncommon spirit to the warmth and passion of the character. Though short-sighted, his eye seemed piercing, and big with what his mind conceived. In the interview with the Conspirators, in the third act, he threw a gallantry into his action as striking as it was unexpected. In this scene, I should recollect, that formerly, Pietre, after challenging the other Conspirators, addressed himself to one of them in the following terms :

Or thou! with that lean, wither'd, wretched, face!

And that an actor of a most unfortunate figure, with a pale countenance, stood up, with a half-drawn sword, and raised a general laugh in the audience. The famous Tony Aston, the itinerant comedian, was the last performer of this ridiculous part.

But Mossop excelled greatly in the vehement reproaches which, in the fourth act, he poured, with energy and force, on the treachery and cowardice of Jaffier. The tones of his voice were equally adapted to the loudest rage and the most deep and solemn reflection, which he judiciously varied.

Mrs. Cibber was long the Belvidera of Barry and Garrick; her excellencies are still fresh in the memory of a public who loved and admired them. Every situation of Belvidera seemed to be formed on purpose to call forth her great skill in awakening the passions. Mrs. Yates and Mrs. Craw-

Crawford were no mean competitors of Mrs. Cibber, in this, as well as many other parts which require equal abilities.

Mrs. Siddons has, in Belvidera, as well as many other parts, not only attracted the attention, but absolutely fixed the favour of the town in her behalf. This actress, like a resistless torrent, has borne down all before her. Her merit, which is certainly very extensive in tragic characters, seems to have swallowed up all remembrance of present and past performers; but, as I would not sacrifice the living to the dead, neither would I break down the statues of the honourable deceased to place their successors on their pedestals. The fervour of the public is laudable; I wish it may be lasting, but I hope without that ingratitude to their old servants which will make their passion for Mrs. Siddons less valuable, as it will convey a warning to her, that a new face may possibly erase the impression which

she has so anxiously studied to form, and so happily made. The person of Mrs. Siddons is greatly in her favour: just rising above the middle stature, she looks, walks, and moves, like a woman of a superior rank. Her countenance is expressive; her eye so full of information, that the passion is told from her look before she speaks. Her voice, though not so harmonious as Mrs. Cibber's, is strong and pleasing; nor is a word lost for want of due articulation, which the comedian should always consider as his first duty, and esteem the finest conception of passion of no value without it. She excels all persons in paying attention to the business of the scene; her eye never wanders from the person she speaks to or should look at, when she is silent. Her modulation of grief, in her plaintive pronunciation of the interjection, oh! is sweetly moving, and reaches to the heart. Her madness, in *Belvidera*, is terribly affecting. The many accidents,

accidents, of spectators falling into fainting-fits in the time of her acting, bear testimony to the effects of her exertions.

She certainly does not spare herself. — Neither the great nor the vulgar can say, that Mrs. Siddons is not in *downright earnest*.

The actors have assured me, that the farces which used to raise mirth in an audience after a tragedy, now fail of that effect, from Mrs. Siddons's having so absolutely depressed the spirits of the audience, that the best comic actors cannot recall them into mirth or vivacity.

I have said, in the Memoirs of Garrick, that Mrs. Crawford, in tragedy, knew the readiest way to the heart; and I will not retract: I will add, farther, that her comic humour is not much inferior to her tragic spirit. Miss Young's accomplishments, in the same book, I honestly and heartily acknowledged. This winter will perhaps excite such a laudable emulation amongst the

the actors, that the town will, in all probability, be as reasonably entertained as they ever have been since the retirement of our great Roscius.

Mrs. Yates, I am informed, intends soon to quit the stage. The English theatre will long lament the loss of an actress, whose just elocution, noble manner, warm passion, and majestic deportment, have excited the admiration of foreigners, and fixed the affection and applause of Britons.

Before I finish my remarks on the actors of Venice Preserved, I think myself called upon to do justice to the merits of Mr. Brereton. All the tender and passionate situations of Jaffier, it appears, he had well studied; for, in every attitude, he expressed them justly. He was particularly happy in that masterly scene of varied passion and strong agony, in the fourth act, with Belvidera. It will not be saying too much of Brereton's Jaffier, that even those

those who have been spectators of Garrick and Barry in the same character, could yet see him with pleasure. I could wish an actor of Mr. Brereton's merit would avoid tones in speaking which approach to something like singing. Of Mr. Bensley's Pierre I shall only observe, that although his person is against him, his conception of the part is very just.

The following anecdote, of Quin and Dr. W——, I was told many years since. The former was at Bath when the latter lived with Mr. A——, whose niece he had married. It was thought a respect due to so eminent a man as Quin, for Mr. A—— to invite him to dinner. After the cloth was removed, the divine entered into conversation with the player on the superior excellencies of Shakspeare. Quin acceded to all that he said upon that topic, but begged to be heard a word or two in favour of Otway. He enlarged on his merits

merits in the pathetic style; nay, in the satiric vein. 'How so, Mr. Quin?' said the doctor.—He, looking archly on the company, and smiling at the great eagerness with which Mr. A——— swallowed every word of W——, pronounced emphatically the following passage in *Venice Preserved*;

————— Honest men
Are the soft easy cushions on which knaves
Repose and fatten.*

Quin knew well enough, that, in acting, Garrick was the doctor's idol, a partiality he could not easily forgive; and, it is supposed, he bluntly embraced this opportunity to let him know his opinion of him. I must not forget to tell my readers, that old Jacob Tonson purchased the copy-right of *Venice Preserved* for *fifteen pounds*! What would another such play be worth now?

Rival

* Act I. scene between Jaffier and Pierre.

Rival Queens;

OR

Alexander the Great.

CHAPTER XLII.

General opinion of the writer and his hero. —

Addison. — Dryden and Lee. — Dryden's

verses. — Lee's style. — Alexander's charac-

ter; — unfairly represented by Pope and

Boileau. — Alexander a builder of cities and

a promoter of commerce. — Mr. Holwell and

the Bramins. — Le Brun and Lee. — Compli-

ment to the action of Hart. — Rymer's opinion

of Hart. — Rochester. — King Charles's pre-

ference of Mohun. — Plain Dealer. — Pinch-

wife. — Characters acted by Hart and Mo-

hun. — The latter not mentioned in an agree-

ment. — Joe Haines and a clergyman. —

Haines dismissed by Hart. — Count Haines.

— Tom Brown. — Dryden. — Anecdote of

Haines,

*Haines, by Quin.—Hart and Nell Gwynn's
—Bishop Tennison and Queen Mary.—
Lee's pathetic reading.—Time when Hart
and Mobun died, unknown.—Betterton's
modesty.—Mountfort.—Booth.—Delane.—
Hulet.—His encounter with a chair.—His
merits.—Custom of hemming.—His sudden
death.—Quin's Clytus.—Mrs. Marshall
and Mrs. Corbet.—Barry, &c.*

THE general opinion of the writer of this play, and of his hero, is not very favourable to either. Lee was a mad poet, it is said, who described in frantic verse the actions of a mad warrior.—But it is the opinion of the sober and judicious Addison, that among our English poets, there was none who was better turned for tragedy than Lee, if, instead of indulging the impetuosity of his genius, he had restrained it within proper bounds.—Of all the poets of his time, Dryden seems to have had the sincerest regard, and firmest friendship for this

this writer. With him he joined in composing the tragedy of the Duke of Guise, and the celebrated Oedipus. His copy of verses on the Rival Queens, contains at once a proof of warm affection, and a fine apology for the exuberant style and extravagant flights of his friend :

Such praise is your's, while you the passions move,
That 'tis no longer feign'd, 'tis real love,
Where nature triumphs over wretched art ;
We only warm the head, but you the heart.
Always you warm ; and, if the rising year,
As in hot regions, bring the sun too near,
'Tis but to make your fragrant spices blow,
Which in our colder climates will not grow.
That humble style which Drones, their virtue make,
Is in your power, you need but stoop and take.
Your beauteous images must be allow'd
By all but some vile poets of the croud :
But how should any sign-post dauber know
The worth of Titian or of Angelo ?

Notwithstanding the fine poetic glow of friendship in these lines, and the sedate decision of Addison, I am afraid we cannot read thirty lines together, even in Lee's best pieces,

pieces, without encountering absurdity in sentiment and solecism in expression:—blunder and beauty are so blended together, you know not how to separate them. His many turgid lines and incoherent thoughts make us admire his more happy and successful efforts. Lee, by the warmth of his temper, carries every passion to extreme: his love is dotage, and his anger madness. However, it must be confessed, that, in several of his plays, such as *Mithridates*, *Theodosius*, *L. Junius Brutus*, and *Alexander*, there is still enough to affect the most critical audience. As long as the stage will be able to furnish good actors for his *Alexander*, it will draw together all ranks of people, from the heroic lover, and the lady of high rank, to the lowest of the crowd.

As to the hero himself, by the consent of all eminent historians, he was the greatest and the most generous of conquerors; nor must we regard the satire of Boileau
and

and Pope as a genuine representation of fact or character. The latter has ill coupled the Conqueror of Asia with the boorish Charles: *From Macedonia's madman to the Swede.* You might as well put in comparison the swift racer and the laborious cart-horse. So have I heard Garrick, in an ill humour, put the merits of Barry and Sparkstogether, which were utterly dissimilar.

Boileau goes farther than Pope; not satisfied with putting the Conqueror of the world into a mad-house, he calls on the Lieutenant de Police to seize him and execute him as a felon :

Qu'on livre son pareil en France à la Reinie :
 Dans trois jours nous verrons le phénix de guerriers
 Laisser sur l'échaffaut sa tête et ses lauriers.

In my opinion, Voltaire too seriously refutes the poet's rhapsody. Boileau might reasonably have been asked, whether his master, Louis XIV. could not be justly termed

VOL. III. T the

the *pareil* of his Alexander, whose ambition was less laudable than that of the Greek, because founded on more sordid motives. Let it not be forgotten, that Alexander, at a time of life subject to the turbulence of passion, and during the intoxication of conquest, founded and built more cities than all the other conquerors of Asia had destroyed; and that the man whom the poets treat as a fool and a madman, absolutely changed and improved the commerce of the world. It is true, indeed, that our own Holwell, who lived thirty years among the Bramins, and made himself master of their ancient as well as modern language, assures us, that their annals bear witness to the invasion of their country by Alexander; and that, in their dialect, they call him *robber* and *murderer*. But these pacific people, Voltaire observes, had no other idea of a warrior; and it is believed they bestowed the same titles on the kings of Persia themselves.

Lee

Lee has, artfully enough, contrived to insert in his tragedy, the most material events of Alexander's life: the death of Philotas, the passage of the Granicus, his conquests in India, his passion for Roxana, the death of Clytus, and many other transactions. Those who have seen Le Brun's picture of Alexander's passing the Granicus, will justify the animated description of it which Cibber so improperly censures:

When glory, like the dazzling eagle, stood
Perch'd on my beaver in the Granic flood!
When fortune's self my standard trembling bore,
And the pale fates stood frighted on the shore;
When the immortals on the billows rode,
And I myself appear'd the leading god!

Lee has, in the true spirit of poetry, clothed the beautiful and glowing figures of the pencil.

In the English Review of July 1784, I am condemned for praising lines whose bombast, the writer assures us, was become proverbial. I did not know that Cibber's

authority in criticism, was so well established; for in no other writer are they reprobated as an instance of the false sublime.

The name of Warburton may, perhaps, have some weight with this gentleman. In his notes on Pope's first Epistle of Horace's 2d book, he enters largely into the merit of the lines I have quoted; and after observing, that these six lines, unluckily for the Laureat's criticism, contain not only *the most sublime*, but *the most judicious, imagery* that poetry can conceive, he proceeds to particularize the beauty of each line.

Had the gentleman seen Le Brun's painting of Alexander's battles, or even the prints taken from them, he would not have slighted my remark, that 'Lee, in the true spirit of poetry, had clothed the beautiful and glowing figures of the pencil.'

This tragedy was long the favourite of the court and city, especially when acted, as originally, by Hart, Mohun, Mrs. Marshall, Mrs. Boutell, and others. —

Hart

Hart was so universally applauded in Alexander, that Downes has recorded a fine compliment paid him by a nobleman : —
' That his action, in that character, was so excellent, that no prince in Europe need be ashamed to learn deportment from him.' He adds too, that, whenever, Hart acted this part, the house was crouded as to a new play. The great critic, Rymer, declared, that such was the enchanting force of Mr. Hart's action, such his ease, grace, majesty, and dignity, that he imposed upon the spectator the worst productions of the poet; who, from the accomplished behaviour of the actor, was deceived into an opinion of merit in the writer. Of Mohun I have already given Lord Rochester's opinion; which, coming from one of a capricious temper, who often praised one man from pique or envy to another, I should not so much rely on, if not confirmed by the general testimony. They were both great favourites of the
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king and courtiers. Sometimes, we must suppose, an emulation would be excited from a comparison made of their several excellencies. Charles, on seeing the performance of both in a new play, observed to his courtiers, that Mohun, or Moon, as he pronounced it, shone, that day, like the sun, and Hart like the moon. The latter was, in person, taller, and more genteel in shape, than the former; he seems to have claimed the lead in choice of characters. From Mohun's generally acting grave, solemn, and austere, parts, I should have cast him into that of Manly in the Plain Dealer; but it seems Hart claimed it, and, to prove his right to it, addressed the audience in a plain-dealing prologue, full of severe censure on the pit. — In the same author's Country Wife, Pinchwife, a part not unallied in humour to Manly, was acted by Mohun, and Horner by Hart. But these accomplished players were not confined to one walk,
either

either in tragedy or comedy. Though Hart generally shone in the gay gentleman, such as Dorimant and Loveless, in Sir Fopling Flutter and the Scornful Lady, Mohun acted, to great advantage, the lively and volatile Valentine, in Wit without Money. I suspect that these actors, who had been, from their youth, brought up almost together under two different masters in the profession of the stage, and who had been fellow-soldiers in the cause of their royal master, and partners in the direction of the theatre, at last by some unhappy difference, were alienated from each other; for, in the agreement between Dr. Davenant and Betterton on the one part, and Hart and Kynaston on the other, in the year 1681, the name of Mohun is not mentioned; that he was alive at that time we know from his having acted a part in Southern's Persian Prince, in 1682, before the two royal companies were united.

Hart was always esteemed a constant ob-

server of decency in manners, and a respecter of the clergy. That witty but debauched droll, Joe Haines, had persuaded a clergyman, into whose company he had introduced himself, that the players were a set of people who wished to be reformed; and that he could recommend him to be chaplain to the theatre, with a handsome yearly income; that he had nothing to do but to summon the company to prayers every morning, by ringing a bell. This impudent trick was carried so far, that the clergyman was introduced by Haines, with a bell in his hand, behind the scenes, which he frequently rang, and cried out, audibly, 'Players! players! come to prayers!' While Joe and some of the actors were enjoying this happy contrivance, Hart came into the theatre; and, seeing the parson and his bell, soon found out the imposition; he was extremely angry with Haines, whom he smartly reprehended, and invited the clergyman to dine with him; he soon

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convinced him that Haines was an improper companion for a man of his function. Haines and Mr. Hart could not by any means agree; the sober management of the latter did not suit with the irregular and vicious conduct of the former. Haines, not submitting to be governed by the established rules of the king's theatre, was dismissed, and soon after received into Betterton's company.* He was a wit and a great joker, and writer of prologues and epilogues, many of which he spoke himself. The famous one, pronounced on the back of an ass, has often raised abundance of mirth, and was lately revived by some of our comedians; though I think the jest is now so worn out, that a new one might be formed at no great expence of brains. Haines travelled over several parts of Europe, with a gentleman, who, to enjoy his drollery, bore

* Downes says, that Haines, having affronted Mr. Hart, he dismissed him.

bore his expences : this got him the name of Count Haines. Tom Brown celebrates Haines as a jolly toper ; and employs him as a quack, in the infernal regions, to cure the disorders of Erebus. Tom, likewise, from his envy or dislike of Dryden, makes out a whimsical dialogue between him and Haines, where their several conversions to popery are discussed with some pleasantry. From Haines's calling Dryden, several times in this dialogue, Poet *Squab*, a name originally given him by Rochester, we may guess at his make and form. By Dryden's ranking Haines with Oates, in the last line of his epilogue to the Pilgrim, revived for his son's benefit, it is evident he was displeased at being joined with this debauched player, and resents the affront in terms by no means to the honour of Haines.—— Speaking of stage-reformation, he says,

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In short, we'll grow as moral as we can,
 Save here and there a woman or a man:
 But neither you nor we, with all our pains,
 Can make clean work; there will be some remains,
 While you have still your Oates, and we our
 Haines.

These, I believe, were the last lines which were written by this great poet, who died soon after; nor did Haines long survive him. As I shall not have many opportunities to mention this odd character, I will here quote an anecdote relating to him, which I heard from the mouth of Mr. Quin, in the green-room of Covent-garden, the winter when he and Garrick were engaged at that theatre.

Mr. Garrick was informing the company then present, of his acting the part of Orestes, in the Distressed Mother, at Dublin. 'In order,' said he, 'to gain a more accurate knowledge of the character, I waited on the author, Ambrose Philips, who lived not far from the metropolis. I begged him to inform me particularly

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concerning his intention in the mad-scene of Orestes. Philips told me, that, during his writing that part of the play, he was like a person out of his mind; that he was so carried away by his enthusiastic rapture, that, when his friend Mr. Addison came into the room, he did not know him; and that, as soon as he recovered from his fit, he said to him,—What, Joe, is it you? — ‘That,’ said Quin, ‘was to let you know how familiar he was with Mr. Addison. And this puts me in mind, Mr. Garrick, of a story I have heard related of a predecessor of our’s, that witty and wicked rogue, Joe Haines. In the reign of James II. the court was busy in making converts to the Roman Catholic faith, in which they had some success.—Some of the new papists pretended to have seen visions and dreamt dreams; and, amongst the rest, Joe Haines, who professed himself a convert, declared that the Virgin Mary had appeared to him. Lord Sun-

Sunderland sent for Joe, and asked him about the truth of his conversion, and whether he had really seen the Virgin? — Yes, my Lord, I assure you it is a fact. — How was it, pray? — Why, as I was lying in my bed, the Virgin appeared to me, and said, *Arise, Joe!* — You lie, you rogue, said the Earl; for, if it had really been the Virgin herself, she would have said *Joseph*, if it had been only out of respect to her husband.'

Hart was the first successful lover of the famous Nell Gwyn; and, from a seller of oranges, brought her to the stage, where she acted many years with the public applause. Her royal master, the indolent Charles, was so pleased with the charms of her conversation, that he more than shared his time between her and his mistresses of higher rank; nor was he ever better pleased than with the agreeable dalliances and sprightly witticisms of the charming Nelly. Some years since, I saw, at Mr. Berenger's house,

house, in the Mews, a picture of this lady, said to be drawn by Sir Peter Lely; and she appeared to have been extremely attractive. Charles, with his last breath, recommended poor Nelly to his successor. She was good-natured, friendly, and charitable. Dr. Tennison, her parish priest, preached her funeral-sermon; and, when some starch people objected to his promotion to the see of Canterbury on that account, the generous Queen Mary defended him; saying, at the same time, that Tennison was so honest a man, that she believed all he said of Mrs. Gwyn was true.

Hart, when he gave up his interest in the king's theatre, to Dr. Davenant and Mr. Betterton, stipulated for a weekly salary of forty shillings, which he did not long enjoy. The stone put an end to his life; but I cannot say, with any certainty, at what time.

Of this accomplished actor, the Tatler has preserved a very just remark on acting:

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‘It was impossible,’ he said, ‘that the player could ever act with grace, except he had forgotten that he was before an audience: till he was arrived at that, his motion, his air, his every step and gesture, have something in them which discovers he is under restraint, for fear of being ill received; or, if he considers himself as being in the presence of those who approve his behaviour, you see an affectation of that pleasure run through his whole carriage.’

The great advantage of playing an original character, is derived from the instructions of the author. From him the learning of the part must be communicated to his instrument, the player: if he is a master in his profession, he will, in his turn, impart useful hints to the poet, which will contribute to the improvement of the scene. Mohun, who acted Clytus in Alexander, Cibber tells us, had so high an opinion of Lee’s power in recitation, that he threw down a part, in despair of acting

acting it up to the pathos of Lee's reading it.

Mohun was an able second to his friend, Hart, and equally admired for his great and profound knowledge in his profession. He is celebrated by Lord Rochester, as the great *Æsopus* of the stage. The dignity of his step, said his Lordship, mimics could imitate, though they could not reach the sublimity of his elocution. Cibber, who lived so near the times of Hart and Mohun, could possibly have collected something relating to these eminent players worthy our notice; at present, we cannot even say when they were born, or when they died. The time of Mohun's death is not more known than that of Hart.

Betterton, after the re-union of the companies, acted Alexander with as much eclat as any of his other characters. This accomplished, but modest player, when rehearsing this character, was at a loss to recover a particular emphasis of Hart, which

which gave a force to some interesting situation of the part; he applied for information to the players who stood near him. At last, one of the lowest of the company repeated the line exactly in Hart's key. Betterton thanked him heartily, and put a piece of money in his hand, as a reward for so acceptable a service.

But Betterton, growing in years, soon resigned this laborious part to Mountfort, of whose merits, in acting lovers and heroes, Cibber speaks at large. On the unhappy murder of Mountfort, Betterton, says Cibber, resumed Alexander, and threw unexpected lustre on the part. — George Powell sometimes acted this favourite hero of the ladies, with applause: Keen was his Clytus. Booth was too accurate a scholar, it seems, to act the mad Alexander; and, in my opinion, lost an opportunity of displaying to advantage, the harmony of his voice, the vigour of his action, and the gracefulness of his deportment.

The play had lain dormant many years, at all the theatres, when Mr. Delane, an actor from Dublin, in 1733 revived it, by his acting Alexander, with uncommon success, at the theatre in Goodman's fields; where it was represented for many nights successively, with much emolument to Mr. Giffard, the manager. Of Mr. Delane I have said as much as I thought necessary to point out his abilities, in the Life of Garrick, who certainly did this actor no service, by mimicking him in the famous simile of the boar and sow in the Rehearsal. His voice and manner were so exactly imitated, that the audience enjoyed the representation by repeated applause. Ch. Hulet acted Clytus with Delane at Goodman's fields, as did Quin at Covent-garden. Hulet was apprentice to the famous Edmund Curl, the bookfeller, where he learned very early the art of stage-murders; for Charles, acting the part of Alexander in the kitchen,

with

with an elbow-chair for his Clytus, in his fury, with a poker in his hand instead of a javelin, broke it to pieces, with such noise and violence,* that Curl, in the parlour, called out to know what was the matter : ' Nothing, Sir,' said the apprentice, ' but Alexander has killed Clytus.' Hulet, by his master's permission, after he had served two years of his apprenticeship, tried his fortune on the stage, at Lincoln's-inn-fields theatre. Here he remained several years; and met with encouragement from the public, with the patronage of Quin; but his income not equalling his expences, he embraced Mr. Giffard's offer of a larger salary; and acted at Goodman's fields many principal characters : such as Henry VIII. Falstaff, Othello, King in the Mourning Bride, Clytus, and Cassius in Julius Cæsar.

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Hulet

* Chetwood.

Hulet was an excellent Macheath; the songs in that part he sung more agreeably than Walker. He was happy in a fine, strong, clear, and melodious pipe; his being too sensible of this was the immediate cause of his death: he took an idle pleasure in stealing unperceived on a person, and deafening him with a loud hem, to shew the strength and firmness of his lungs. As he was practising this trick one morning at rehearsal, by an extraordinary effort he broke a blood-vessel, by which he died in twenty-four hours. Honest Lyon, a good comic actor, and so remarkable for a retentive memory, that he could repeat a newspaper, with all the advertisements, after reading it thrice over,* was present when this uncommon accident happened, and related it to me many years since, with

* Mr. H. Giffard gained a wager on a trial of Lyon's memory, by a repetition of a newspaper and all its contents.

with this addition: that Hulet, being much alarmed at the quantity of blood which issued from his mouth, was persuaded to go home; two eminent physicians were sent for immediately, who pronounced the case desperate, and would not prescribe.

Hulet was extremely corpulent, supposed to be owing to his drinking large quantities of porter and ale. He was a great feeder, and indolent to excess, careless of his dress, not to say sordidly negligent of his person. In conversation he was lively and facetious, extremely good-natured, and a most excellent mimic; but this talent of imitation he never exercised to the disadvantage of his fellow-comedians. The public lost this valuable actor in the thirty-fifth year of his age. Quin acted Clytus with approbation; but not in a manner more truly characteristic than Hulet. There was in the latter's voice more variety of tone, with strength equal to that of his competitor.

The Vanquisher of Asia never appeared to more advantage in representation, I believe, than in the person of Spranger Barry. He looked, moved, and acted, the hero and the lover, in a manner so superior and elevated, that he charmed every audience that saw him; he gave new life and vigour to a play which had not been seen since the death of Delane. His address to his favourite Queen was soft and elegant, and his love ardently passionate; in the scene with Clytus, in his rage, he was greatly terrible; and, in his penitence and remorse, wonderfully pathetic. In his last distracting agony, his delirious laugh was wild and frantic, and his dying groan affecting.

William Powell had, from nature, many requisites to exhibit, with propriety and skill, lovers and heroes: his person and voice were well adapted to them; his ear was good; nor did he want any thing but time to bring his judgment to maturity.

In

In Alexander he was certainly inferior to Barry; but his distance from that great actor was not disgraceful. If we take into our account the very short time he was on the stage, we shall be surprised at the great progress he made in the art he professed.

The original Rival Queens, Mrs. Marshall and Mrs. Boutell, were much celebrated, especially the first, who acted Roxana. She excelled in characters of dignity, and in expressing the strong emotions of the heart. The high sentiments of honour, in many of her characters, were correspondent to the dictates of her mind, and justified by her own private conduct. She was particularly admired in Roxolana, a character of heroic virtue, in one of Lord Orrery's plays. —

Aubrey de Vere, Earl of Oxford,* was so charmed with Mrs. Marshall, that he pursued her in all the shapes a passionate and

U 4

artful

* History of the English Stage, 1741.

artful lover could assume. Distracted with the repulses his love received, he determined to seize her by force, as she came from the play-house; but she, being informed of his design, obtained a party of the king's guards to protect her. His Lordship attacked her chair, but was repulsed. The adventure was spread over the town. The gentlemen who claimed a sort of right to behave with licentious freedom to the females of the theatre, were angry and disappointed, while the ladies were pleased, and much extolled the conduct of the stage heroine. The king himself interposed in her favour; and told the earl, that, although by his own conduct he had too much countenanced the vice, he thought it bad enough *with* the consent of the fair; but that violence was unpardonable in a sovereign, and still more so in a subject. The earl promised to think no more of her; but in a few days he renewed his addresses, assuring her he could
not

not live without her; he was so charmed, he said, with her exalted virtue, that he had resolved, with her consent, to marry her. This bait Roxolana swallowed; and the earl was married to her by his coachman in the dress of a clergyman. Soon after this pretended marriage, he took off the mask, told her the deceit, and bade her return to the stage. She threw herself at the king's feet, who commanded the earl to allow her a yearly income of 500l. nor would he permit his Lordship to marry during the life of her son by him. The time of Mrs. Marshall's leaving the stage, and her death, are equally uncertain.

Mrs. Boutell,* the original Statira, was low in stature, had very agreeable features, a good complexion, with a childish look. Her voice was not strong, but pleasing and mellow; she generally acted tender

* History of the English Stage, 1741.

der and innocent young ladies. By the generosity of her lovers, she was enabled to quit the stage before the approach of old age. A quarrel, between her and Mrs. Barry, after the union of the companies, concerning a veil, which the latter claimed for Roxana, and the other as strenuously demanded for Statira, had like to have proved of fatal consequence to the latter. She, by the contrivance or interest of the wardrobe-keeper, carried off the veil triumphantly. The Rival Queens acted with much spirit and animosity. In the last act, Roxana struck Statira with such force, when she wounded her with the dagger, that it entered a quarter of an inch into the flesh. As it was well known these ladies were not vestals, it was reported, jealousy gave force to the blow.*

Alex-

* Mrs. Crawford was so much in earnest, when she stabbed Dionysius, in the Grecian Daughter, that Palmer felt the effects of the blow some months after.

Alexander's death is attributed, in the play, to poison; but, with more probability, we may place it to drunkenness. — The hero drank at once, a cup which held fourteen pints: as he was attempting to mend his draught, by another equal quantity, he was seized with giddiness, and soon after died.*

In Lee's dedication of his *Alexander* to the Earl of Mulgrave, we have a glaring, but genuine picture of the manners of the Times, from one who was a sharer in all its follies and irregularities:

— 'An age, whose business is senseless riot, Neronian gambols, and ridiculous debauchery; an age, which can produce few persons, like your Lordship, who dare be alone. All our hot hours are burnt in night-revels, or drowned by day in dead sleep.' This was written in 1677.

Lee

* Athenæus.

Lee tried his fortune on the stage, in the character of Duncan, in Macbeth, but failed. Otway, much about the same time, played a King in one of Mrs. Behn's plays; but the sight of the audience so terrified him, says Downes, that he was in a tremendous agony, and spoilt for an actor.

The Rehearsal.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Middle comedy.—Buckingham's acquaintance with Ben Jonson.—An admirer of the old actors.—His opposition to the new taste in writing plays.—Play of the United Kingdoms.—The Rehearsal, when first acted.—Sir Robert Howard.—Simile of the turtles; boar and sow.—The family of Howard.—Original actor of Bayes.---Dryden's dress.---Buckingham and Dorset.---Joe Haines's Bayes, with the recantation-prologue.---Estcourt, companion of Addison, &c.---His Bayes.---Old bill of the Rehearsal.---Heigh ho!---Estcourt's qualities.---Colley Cibber and the public at variance.---Weston.---Steele's character of Estcourt.---Remarks on Steele.---Mimics more dreaded than beloved.---Garrick and Foote.---Passage in the Spectator restored.---Dr. Ratcliffe.---Secretary

*tary Craggs and Sir Godfrey Kneller.--The
 Bayes of Colley Cibber.---Pope and Gay.--
 Bayes of Theophilus Cibber;---of Garrick;
 ---of Foote.--How Buckingham lost the
 favour of Charles II. ---Joe Asbe, the box-
 keeper.---Anecdotes of Buckingham.*

THE comedy of the Rehearsal, or rather farce of five acts, is of the same species with the middle comedy of the Greeks, in which characters of living persons are introduced with such attributes as make them known to the audience. Of this kind was the Poetaster of Ben Jonson, and the Satiromastix of Decker; most, if not all, of Mr. Foote's pieces are of the same sort.

George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, the writer of this witty satire, was, when a boy, acquainted with Ben Jonson. He imbibed an early taste and regard for our best old dramatic poets, especially for Ben himself, and Beaumont and Fletcher; the
 name

name of Shakspeare I do not see in any part of his writings. He likewise was much prejudiced in favour of the comedians who acted at the Globe and Black-Friers, whom he saw before the commencement of the civil wars: these he greatly admired and praised; they had struck his young fancy, and he preferred them to succeeding actors.

Soon after the Restoration, a great number of plays were written upon a new model; in which all resemblance of humanity was forgotten; probability was thrown out of sight, and monstrous births took place of such productions as were founded on truth and nature. Buckingham, by his own personal opposition, and his interest with several gentlemen who were of high rank, tried to stem the torrent of high-flown nonsense and low ribaldry, which was the reigning taste. He once ventured so far, in exploding a play, written by the Honourable

ble Henry Howard, eldest son to the Earl of Berkshire, called the United Kingdoms, that he ran the hazard of his life. This play having in it a funeral, Mr. Bayes ridicules it in that part of the Rehearsal where he informs his friend Johnson, that, as he would have no scenes alike in his play, the last act beginning with a witty scene, the next should begin with a funeral. Mr. Howard's play was absolutely condemned, and the author was prudent enough not to print it, by which he escaped all farther animadversion.

The Rehearsal was begun about the year 1663, and finished ready for acting about two years after. The plague, in 1665, prevented its representation, so that it did not make its appearance till 1671; then it came out with considerable alterations and improvements. The author, in his original plan, intended to have made Sir Robert Howard the principal character, by the name of Bilboa. But the great reputation of

of Dryden, who succeeded Sir William Davenant in his office of poet-laureat, gave his Grace a fair opportunity to expose the turgid rants and unmeaning bombast so frequent in the early dramatic works of that eminent writer.

The success of this satire more than answered the expectation of the author; and indeed the *Rehearsal* is a very singular composition; in one respect it is like *Don Quixote*, for it is read and acted with pleasure, though the absurdities ridiculed in it are no longer in being. For easy wit, gay ridicule, strong burlesque, and happy parody, our language can boast nothing like it. Such is the power of ridicule, it can make that appear a subject for laughter which is really in itself not so.

The parody of Dryden's simile of the turtles, in the second part of his *Conquest of Granada*, is a strong instance of the power of ludicrous wit. As I shall not trouble my reader with many quotations

from a play which is in every body's hands, I shall only give the simile and the parody upon it:

So two kind turtles, when a storm is nigh,
Look up, and see it gathering in the sky;
Each calls his mate to shelter in the groves,
Leaving in murmurs their unfinish'd loves;
Perch'd on some dropping branch, they sit alone,
And coo, and hearken to each other's moan.

The parody:

So boar and sow, when any storm is nigh,
Snuff up, and see it gathering in the sky;
Boar beckons sow to trot in chestnut-groves,
And there consummate their unfinish'd loves;
Pensive, in mud, they wallow all alone,
And snort and gruntle to each other's moan.

Dryden put the best face on the matter, and endeavoured to laugh at the grotesque picture drawn for him; but, though he was wise enough to conceal his wound, he felt the smart of it. The revenge he took, in the character of Zimri, in his *Abfalom* and *Achitophel*, which he drew for the
author

author of the Rehearsal, is a proof that he was thoroughly angry.

Though Dryden's extravagant flights in dramatic poetry, were chiefly aimed at in the Rehearsal, yet many authors of the times had a just claim to their share of satirical reprehension. The noble family of Howard was distinguished for dramatic productions, in which were to be found plots romantic and absurd, and characters, not drawn from nature, but wild and ungoverned fancy. To revive, in this place, the names of these exploded pieces, would be invidious; those whose curiosity may be excited to know them, will turn to the Key of the Rehearsal.

The original actor of Bayes was the celebrated John Lacy, a man of infinite comic humour, if we can trust to honest Downes and all traditional remembrance of him. How this character was dressed by Lacy, it is not now to be known. Dryden, it was said, was fond of wearing black vel-

vet ; and we may suppose the player endeavoured to resemble him, as near as possible, in dress and deportment. I have heard, indeed, that the Duke of Buckingham and the Earl of Dorset prevailed on Dryden to accompany them, in the boxes, on the first night of acting the Rehearsal ; and placed the poet between them to enjoy the feelings of his mind during the exhibition of his own picture. The peculiarities of Dryden, when he instructed the players, seem to be strongly marked through the whole piece.

The immediate successor of Lacy, in Bayes, is unknown. Joe Haines, on his return from his travels, acted Bayes ; and spoke a recantation-prologue, in a white sheet, with a burning taper in his hand, upon his admittance into the playhouse after his return from the church of Rome. This prologue was written by Tom Brown, for his friend Joe Haines. A few lines of

of this address to the public, by that pious penitent, will, I believe, satisfy the reader :

As you dislike the converts of the nation,
That went to Rome and left your congregation,
By the same rule, pray kindly entertain
Your penitent lost sheep return'd again.
For re-converted Haines, taught by the age,
Is now come back to his primitive church, the stage.
I own my crime, of leaving in the lurch
My mother-playhouse:—she's my mother-church.

The celebrated Dick Estcourt, the companion of Addison, Steele, Parnel, (who honoured him, in a Bacchanalian poem, by the name of Jocus,) and all the learned and choice spirits of the age he lived in, acted Bayes during the government of the theatre by Wilks, Dogget, and Cibber. There cannot be a stronger proof, of the old custom of distributing the parts in a play according to the strength of the company, before the introduction of those exotics, the pantomimes, than the following bill of theatrical fare, which I produce

from the first edition of the Spectator, published in numbers:

The part of Bayes by Mr. Estcourt; Johnson by Mr. Wilks; Smith, Mr. Mills; Prettyman, Mr. Powell; Volscius, Mr. Cibber; the Kings of Brentford, Bullock and Bowen; Gentleman-Usher, Pinkethman; Physician, Cross; Tom Thimble, Dogget; Fisherman, Johnson; Pallas, Bullock; Heigh ho! Norris.

Here we have all the best comedians of the age grouped in this comedy; and Norris, an excellent comic genius, the speaker of two lines only;

Heigh ho! heigh ho! what a change is here! Hey day! hey day! I know not what to do nor what to say!

This odd soliloquy he uttered in such a manner, as to occasion his being termed by the audience, and announced in the bills, by the name of Heigh ho!

The original actor of this drowsy politician

cian was one Shirley, and quoted by that name in the play. This man caused the whole audience to gape and yawn. He seems to have made himself, like William Peer, mentioned in the Spectator, famous for speaking a line or two.

Estcourt was so remarkable a genius, so celebrated for ready wit, gay pleasantries, and a wonderful talent in mimicry, that something more than barely mentioning him is due to his memory; more especially as he was a man as much beloved for the goodness of his heart as admired for his various talents.

With respect to his stage-abilities, Colley Cibber speaks of them, in his Apology, but slightly. He confesses indeed that Estcourt understood a character well, though he had not, he said, acquired the art to do justice to it in representation; he instances Falstaff particularly. But Cibber and the public seemed widely to have differed; for Estcourt's name is often placed in the bills

for characters of consequence, at a time when Cibber was a manager of the theatre. Nay, we see, that such was the confidence of the directors of the stage in his powers to please the public, that Cibber, who afterwards played Bayes, contented himself, during the life of Estcourt, with the inferior part of Prince Volscius. He was the original Serjeant Kite in the Recruiting Officer, Pounce in the Tender Husband, and of other parts of importance. Cibber, I doubt not, mixed a degree of envy in his criticism. Of a player's merits the public is a fairer judge than the most enlightened of his own profession. How often have I heard the merits of poor Weston questioned by actors of no mean capacity! when the people could never see him on the stage, without paying him the tribute of what Cibber justly calls unbought applause, loud and involuntary laughter!

Honest Downes calls Estcourt *histrionatus*.

'He has the honour,' says this historian,

'(nature

‘(nature enduing him with an easy, free, unaffected, mode of elocution,) in comedy, always to lætificate his audience; especially the quality.’

Sir Richard Steele, who thought it not beneath him to be the intimate friend of Estcourt, has, in the *Spectator*,* drawn a most amiable picture of him. I shall quote some striking traits of his abilities : ‘He had so exquisite a discerning of what was defective in any object before him, that, in an instant, he could shew you the ridiculous side of what would pass for beautiful and just, even to men of no ill judgment, before he had pointed at the failure. He was no less skilful in the knowledge of beauty ; and I dare say, that there is no one who knew him well, but can repeat more well-turned compliments, as well as smart repartees, of Mr. Estcourt, than of any other man in England. This was

* Vol. VI. Number 468.

was easily to be observed in his inimitable faculty of telling a story; in which he would throw in natural and unexpected incidents, to make his court to one part, and rally the other part, of the company; then he would vary the usage he gave them, according as he saw them bear kind or sharp language. He had the knack to raise up a pensive temper, and mortify an impertinently gay one, with the most agreeable skill imaginable.'

Steele farther observes, that it is natural for the wealthy to affix the character of the man to his circumstances; and to this alone he thought it was to be ascribed, that a quick wit in conversation, a nice judgment on any emergency, a most blameless and inoffensive behaviour, could not raise this man above being received upon the footing only of contributing to mirth and diversion.

Steele did not consider, that the man who excels his company in wit, and in the art

art of conversing, raises up so many rivals and enviers, who have nothing to console them but the low fortune of him who triumphs over their inferiority. Estcourt, very imprudently, I think, about a year before his death, opened a tavern.*— This enlarged his acquaintance, and, I believe, shortened his days: he that sells wine and prepares dinners, is at the call of every company that visits his house. To some of these, the wit and gaiety of Estcourt might be agreeable; others would feel the degradation of themselves in the superior qualities of the tavern-man. Let us quote what Steele says of his superlative excellence in mimicry. ‘What was peculiarly excellent in this memorable companion was, that, in the accounts he gave of persons and sentiments, he did not only hit the figure of their faces and manner of their gestures, but he would, in his narrations, fall

* The Bumper tavern, in Covent-garden.

fall into their way of thinking ; and this, when he recounted passages wherein men of the best, as well as such wherein were represented men of the lowest, rank in understanding. It is certainly as great an instance of self-love, to a weakness, to be impatient of being mimicked, as any that can be imagined. There were none but the vain, the formal, the proud, or those who were incapable of amending their faults, that dreaded him; to others he was in the highest degree pleasing.'

The people who dreaded Estcourt and all mimics, were the greatest part of mankind; and by such this man must have lived or starved. The select few that were pleased with him, and had conquered their fear of his imitations, had superior excellencies to cherish their self-love, and could look down with complacency on the inferior talents of their merry companion. Steele congratulates himself on the conquest he had gained over his impatience of
being

being mimicked by Estcourt. The victory was not very easy, I dare believe; for I never in my life saw any man bear the trial with Christian patience. Nay, the great takers-off themselves could not bear the retort courteous of mimicry in another.— Garrick and Foote, the great masters of the art, could not endure to see themselves in the very mirror they held up to others.

Estcourt was a favourite of the great Duke of Marlborough; those who know his Grace's character, will not be surprised that he did not improve his fortune by that distinction. When providore of the beef-steak club, composed of the chief wits and greatest men of the nation, he wore their badge, which was a small gridiron of gold, that hung about his neck with a green silk ribbon.

In the latter editions of the Spectator, Steele concludes his account of Estcourt with a flow of tenderness very natural to a good heart, and a burst of tears:—‘ I
with

wish it were any honour to the pleasant creature's memory, that my eyes are too much suffused to let me go on.' In the original edition, the conclusion stands thus : ' It is a felicity his friends may rejoice in, that he had his senses, and used them as he ought to do, in his last moments. It is remarkable, that his judgement was in its calm perfection to the utmost article ; for, when his wife, out of her fondness, desired she might send for a certain illiterate humorist (whom he had accompanied in a thousand mirthful moments, and whose insolence make fools think he assumes from conscious merit), he answered,——' You may do what you please, but he won't come.'——Let poor Estcourt's negligence about this message convince the unwary of a triumphant empiric's ignorance and inhumanity.'

The triumphant empiric, I believe, was Dr. Ratcliffe. In this manner did the staunch whig, Sir Richard, discharge his
party-

party-spleen on the high-tory doctor; nor indeed could any thing too severely be said of the physician, who refused to attend the man in his sickness who had so often contributed to raise his mirth when in full health. That Ratcliffe was the person meant, is only conjecture; but the character of *humorist* confirms me in my opinion; for Ratcliffe would go to those only his present fancy approved; nor would he stir to a lord, or even a crowned head, till his pipe was out.* Before I quit Estcourt, I must relate an anecdote which will perhaps strengthen what I have said relating to mimicry.—Secretary Craggs, when very young, in company with some of his friends, went, with Dick Estcourt, to Sir Godfrey Kneller; and told him, that a gentleman in company would give such a repre-

* We may justly style that man a humorist, who told K. William, he would not have his two legs for his three kingdoms, nor would attend Q. Anne in her last illness.

representation of some great men, his friends, as would surprise him. Estcourt mimicked Ld Somers, Ld Halifax, Godolphin, and others, so very exactly, that Sir Godfrey was highly delighted, and laughed heartily at the joke. Craggs gave the wink, and Estcourt mimicked Kneller himself; who cried out immediately, *Nay, there you are out, man! by G—, that is not me!*

Cibber succeeded Estcourt in Bayes; and, by a stroke of satire which he threw into the part, provoked the vengeance of Pope, who never forgave it. It seems, the farce of *Three Hours after Marriage*, said to be written by Pope, Gay, and Arbuthnot, had been acted, soon after the accession of George I. with so little success, that Cibber and Oldfield had been severely exploded by the audience. - Our late king, George II. then Prince of Wales, commanded the Rehearsal; and Colley could not forbear ridiculing one of the most unfortunate

fortunate incidents in Three Hours after Marriage, which was the introducing into a physician's house two lovers of his wife, in the shapes of a mummy and a crocodile. Though Pope, from an irritable temper, carried his resentment too far, yet surely Cibber should have remembered, both as player and manager, he ought not to have insulted the work of any author; it was sufficient mortification to him that the audience had condemned it. Mr. Pope was, we will grant Cibber, too intemperate in his language on the occasion; but Cibber's upbraiding him with his form, in the following words,——' Mr. Pope, you are so particular a man, that I should be ashamed to return your language as I ought to do,'——was very gross and utterly unjustifiable. I have heard, that Mr. Gay resented the affront so strongly, that he replied to Cibber in something more feeling than words.

In acting Bayes, Colley Cibber was dressed like a smart coxcomb. In the delineation of the character, he made him sufficiently ridiculous; but I thought he rather exhibited the laughter at Bayes's extravagances, than the man that was enamoured of them.

His son, Theophilus, displayed more vivacity in Bayes than his father; by the invention of new-raised troops, or hobby-horses, and other novelties, with some fresh jokes upon the actors, he drew the public to it for three weeks successively.—But Theophilus mixed too much grimace and false spirit in his best-acted parts.

Mr. Garrick, when he first exhibited Bayes, could not be distinguished from any other gay well-dressed man; but he soon altered it to a dress he thought more suited to the conceit and solemnity of the dramatic coxcomb. He wore a shabby old-fashioned coat, that had formerly been very fine; a
little

little hat, a large flowing brown wig, high-topt shoes with red heels, a mourning sword, scarlet stockings, and cut-fingered gloves.

The difference between Garrick and his immediate predecessors was very conspicuous. They, by their action, told the spectators that they felt all the ridicule of the part; he appeared quite ignorant of the joke that made against him. They seemed to sneer at the folly of Bayes, *with* the audience; the audience laughed loudly at him. By seeming to understand the satire, they caught at the approbation of the pit: he gained their loudest plaudits, without letting them know he deserved them. They were in jest; he was in earnest.

I have already said so much of Mr. Garrick's imitations of the actors, in voice and gesture, that I cannot add any thing more on that head.

The Bayes of Foote was an odd mixture of himself and the Duke of Buckingham; the old building was new-faced with a mo-

dern front. He contrived to adapt, as well as he could, his new superstructure to the old ground-work. His fancy was so exuberant, his conceptions so ready, and his thoughts so brilliant, that he kept the audience in continual laughter. Public transactions, the flying follies of the day, debates of grave assemblies, absurdities of play-writers, politicians, and players, all came under his cognizance, and all felt the force of his wit ; in short, he laid hold of every thing and every body that would furnish merriment for the evening. Foote could have written a new Rehearsal equal to the old.

Of Buckingham's moral and political character I have spoken fully, and, I am convinced, justly, in my observations on the Orphan. I there gave the reader some account of the great affection which Charles II. manifested for this eccentric wit. It now remains that I unfold the cause which dissolved

solved the seemingly inviolable attachment of the king to his favourite. The parliament, which had been firm to Charles whilst they had the least prospect of his adhering to the constitution, in church and state, as then established, on discovering that his war with Holland was carried on with no other view than to introduce despotism, and to ruin, in conjunction with France, the Protestant interest and religion, boldly broke through all forms, and attacked his ministry, composed of the famous Cabal. Buckingham desired he might have leave to vindicate himself before the House of Commons. In his defence, he laid the blame of his conduct on the King and the Duke of York, by a witty allusion to them both. Amongst other things, he said, ' hunting was a good diversion ; but, if a man would hunt with a brace of lobsters, he would have but ill sport.' People understood, that, by the lobsters, the royal brothers were meant.

“And this speech,” says Burnet, “lost him the king’s favour so effectually, that he never recovered it afterwards.” Thus we see, that a man of wit, and master of the joke, could safely offend against all laws human and divine, and yet retain his sovereign’s favour; but, the moment he placed his conduct in a light that rendered it an object of ridicule, the royal countenance is withdrawn from him, and irreconcilable hatred succeeds to the appearance of the most unalterable friendship! It is well known, that Buckingham spoke often of the King most contemptuously; nor did Charles value the Duke for any thing but the happy talent of giving a ludicrous turn to every thing that was serious.

In a letter to Lord Berkley, Buckingham desired him to tell a certain lady, that he had resolved to swear by no other than Joe Ash; ‘and if that,’ said his Grace, ‘be a sin, it is as odd an one as ever she heard of.’ Joe Ash was, it seems, a box-keeper
of

of Drury-lane playhouse. How this man could merit this distinction, I know not, unless he lent the Duke money to supply his necessities, which were often very urgent. Box-keepers, whatever they may be now, by the managers' keeping an eye over their conduct, were formerly richer than their masters. A remarkable instance of it I heard many years since. Colley Cibber had, in a prologue, or some part of a play, given such offence to a certain great man in power, that the playhouse, by order of the Lord-chamberlain, was shut up for some time; Cibber was arrested, and the damages laid at ten thousand pounds. Of this misfortune Booth and Wilks were talking very seriously, at the playhouse, in the presence of a Mr. King, the box-keeper; who asked if he could be of any service, by offering to bail Cibber.—
 'Why, you blockhead,' says Wilks, 'it is for ten thousand pounds.'—'I should be very sorry,' said the box-keeper, 'if I
 Y 4 could.

could not be answerable for twice that sum.' The managers stared at each other; and Booth said, with some emotion, to Wilks, 'What have you and I been doing, Bob, all this time?'

An anecdote or two of the witty writer of the *Rehearsal*, and I have done. Father Petre promised King James to make a convert of Buckingham to popery. He began by attacking the imagination in its weakest part, fear: 'We, my Lord,' said the Jesuit, 'deny that any can possibly be saved out of our church; your Grace allows that our people may be saved.'—'No, curse you!' said the Duke, 'I make no doubt but you will be all damned to a man.' At this, Father Petre started, and said very gravely, 'I cannot argue with a person so void of all charity.'——'I did not expect, my reverend father,' said the Duke calmly, 'such a reproach from you, whose whole reasoning was founded on the very same instance of want of charity in yourself.'

The

The Duke of Queensberry, in his journey to Scotland, heard that Buckingham lay at a certain inn, not many miles from the road, in an illness from which he could not recover. His Grace charitably paid the sick man a visit, and asked him if he would have a clergyman. 'I look upon them,' says Buckingham, 'to be a parcel of silly "fellows, who do not trouble themselves about what they teach.' Queensberry then asked, if he would have *his* chaplain, who was a presbyterian. 'No,' said Bucks, 'these fellows always made me sick with their whine and their cant.' Queensberry, taking it for granted that he must be of some religion, and, of consequence, a Roman Catholic, told him there was a popish lord in the neighbourhood, and asked him if he should send for a priest.' 'No,' says the dying man, 'these rascals eat God; but, if you know of any set of fellows that eat the Devil, I should be obliged

obliged to you if you would send for one of them.*

I must not forget, that the celebrated Mrs. Mountford, the female Proteus in acting, who assumed all characters and became them all, acted Bayes with vivacity and humour; and that Mrs. Clive, some forty years since, attempted the same part for the benefit of her brother, Mr. Raftor; but the public thought Bayes in Petticoats, in a lively farce of her own writing, became her much better.

* Richardson.

Congreve.

Congreve.

OLD BATCHELOR, &c.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Congreve formed upon Wycherly.—Conduct of his fables.—Papists and dissenters.—Wycherly transcribed the manners of the times.—King, court, poets, and pimps combined.—Dryden's opinion of court and poets.—Wycherly's private character.—Old Batchelor ;—its characters.—Cuckold a favourite dish.—Lord Kaims.—Double Dealer ;—Dryden's Verses upon it.—Dedication of the Double Dealer.—A lease of cuckolds.—Maskwell.—Lady Touchwood.—Lord Froth.—Lord Plausible.—Froth's opinion of laughter.—Lord C.—Various species of laughter.—Dimplers and smilers.—House of commons and the theatre.—Lady Froth and Brisk.—Woodward and Mrs. Clive.—

Mijs

Miss Pope.—Mrs. Green.—Clive's superior excellence.---Love for Love;---its great merit.---Sir Sampson Legend.---Foresight, a character of humour.---Ben a wit.---Pope.---Tattle.---Mrs. Frail.---Doris.---Angelica not amiable.

CONGREVE formed himself upon Wycherly; but his wit is more flowing, his fancy more exuberant, his knowledge more extensive, and his judgement more profound: though he is by no means a strict observer of the unities, the conduct of his fables is well studied, and sometimes exact; his catastrophes are generally perplexed, and sometimes improbable.

When Congreve began to write, the licentious manners introduced by Charles II. were in full vigour; the passion to establish popery, in the reign of his successor, had not diminished the immorality of the people. The great view of James
was

was the converting his subjects to his own superstition ; to which, I believe, he was the more devoted, as he fancied their imbibing his religious creed would render them more submissive to his government. Papists, like other dissenters, when in a state of persecution, or deprived of benefits which they ought to enjoy, will endeavour to gain a mitigation of their hardships by contributing to support every scheme of the reigning government with their utmost weight and interest : remove the clogs that separate them from the rest of the people, and papists will have reason to shew themselves as staunch friends to liberty as other subjects.

Wycherly, it is plain, was the original which our young poet admired and copied. Wycherly faithfully transcribed the manners of the times when the king and his courtiers, in conjunction with the poets, were the pimps to debauch the morals of the people. Dr. Johnson styles Wycherly
a scrib-

a scribbler, from an honest indignation, I suppose, at the impurity of his writings; but surely the comedies of Dryden, Otway, and others, are not less exceptionable than his. He, like others, was borne down by the common current, which was rendered irresistible by royal patronage and protection. To this Court encouragement Dryden himself ascribes the vicious writings of the poets :

The Poets, who must live by courts, or starve,
 Were proud so good a government to serve;
 And, mixing with buffoons and pimps profane,
 Tainted the stage for some small snip of gain;
 For they, like harlots under bawds profess,
 Took all th'ungodly pains, and got the least.
 Thus did the thriving malady prevail;
 The court its head, the poets but the tail.
 Misses there were, but modestly conceal'd:
 Whitehall the naked Venus first reveal'd;
 Where, standing, as at Cyprus, in her shrine,
 The strumpet was ador'd with rites divine,* &c.

Few men were so admired, and beloved
 by his contemporaries, as Wycherly: he
 was

* Dryden's epilogue to the Pilgrim.

was esteemed the most accomplished gentleman of the age he lived in, and, as such, was courted and carested by his royal master.

Congreve was endowed with all the strong faculties of perception which enable the comic writer to describe the various characters of mankind. He seems to have known the foibles, passions, humours, and vices of the world, by intuition. His *Old Batchelor* was acted when he was twenty-one: in his dedication, he tells Lord Clifford, that it had lain by him almost four years. Dryden and Southern were astonished when they perused this play, and pronounced it a prodigy of early genius. In the *Old Batchelor*, we perceive, that, from Ben Jonson's *Bobadil* and *Master Stephen*, the author has formed his *Captain Bluff* and *Sir Joseph Wittol*. His gentlemen are partly his own, and partly taken from *Wycherly*. *Bellmour* and *Sharper* are allied to *Horner* and

and Freeman, in the Country Wife and Plain Dealer. Vainlove, who loves no pleasure that is not to be obtained without difficulty, is a character of humour; and so, I think, is Heartwell, who resembles, in some of his features, Pinchwife in the Country Wife.

I cannot think, with Dr. Johnson, that Heartwell is a fictitious character. Many such may be seen, who, having, from spleen or positiveness of disposition, denied themselves, in early life, the pleasures of the conjugal union, growl out the remainder of their days in satirical reflections on the happiness they have rejected. The scene between the Old Batchelor and Sylvia, in the third act, is a masterpiece. — The audience, in Congreve's time, were particularly fond of having a city-cuckold dressed out for their entertainment; and Fondlewife is served up with very poignant sauce; for the several incidents in the scene are extremely diverting. Lord Kaims finds
fault

fault with the dialogue, in the first act, between Bellmour, Sharper, and Heartwell, as if it was mere conversation, and that the business of the play stood still; but what business is more necessary than the knowledge of character? The manners of the personæ dramatis are by such dialogues unfolded to the audience. The same objection may be raised against some interviews of the Prince of Wales and Falstaff, in Henry IV.

The Double Dealer was acted a year after the Old Batchelor. This comedy was ushered into the world by a copy of verses, to his dear friend, Mr. Congreve, by Dryden. In this address he freely acknowledges the superior genius of the old dramatic writers, with a fine compliment to the author of the Double Dealer, who alone supplies all those excellences which were deficient in the writers of Charles II.'s reign. The pathetic conclusion, every

man of taste, though he has often read it,
will be pleased to see inserted here :

Maintain your post, that's all the fame you need,
For 'tis impossible you should proceed.

Already I am worn with care and age,
And just abandoning th'ungrateful stage.*

Unprofitably kept at Heav'n's expence,
I live a rent-charge on his providence. —

But you, whom ev'ry muse and grace adorn,
Whom I foresee to better fortune born,

Be kind to my remains,—and, oh ! defend,
Against your judgment, your departed friend !

Let not th'insulting foe my fame pursue,

But shade those laurels which descend to you ;

And take for tribute what these lines express ;

You merit more, nor could my love do less !

In his dedication of the Double Dealer,
to Montague, afterwards E. of Halifax, the
author, though he owns he failed in his
attempt,

* His last play, of Love Triumphant, or Nature
will Prevail, was acted the same year with the
Double Dealer.

attempt, says, he designed to have written a regular comedy. But he soon takes courage to assert, that he has not miscarried in the whole: he had resolved, he says, to preserve the three unities. Then, in a luscious style, he heaps abundance of nauseous flattery on his patron; and indeed I think Congreve as awkward a dedicatory as any in our language. When he has finished his panegyric, he tells us, that he hearkened after objections; but, like his friend Dryden, he can find none worth answering; yet he goes on answering several of them. At last he becomes humble, and begs the critic to re-consider his remarks. But what shocks our author most, is the offence he has given to the ladies; for he would rather offend all the critics in the world than one of the fair sex. And yet I think his defence is a very poor one, and amounts to little less than owning his fault; for surely, out of the

whole sex, he might have chosen much better representatives of it than the ladies in the Double Dealer.

The manners of this play are more licentious than those of the Old Batchelor.—

His cuckold, Fondlewife, in that comedy, pleased the town so greatly, that he determined to give the audience a leash of them in his Double Dealer; for he has presented them with no less than three. A father, talking obscenely to his daughter, is something monstrous, and almost incredible; and yet Sir Paul Pliant's instructions to the only virtuous woman in the play, are of that kind.

Maskwell's character is partly taken from Syrus, in the Heautontimorumenos of Terence, who, by uttering truths, carries his point more covertly to deceive; and partly, I think, from the Timantus of Fletcher's Cupid's Revenge; as Lady Touchwood greatly resembles Bacha in the
same

same play. Brisk's pertness is not unlike the petulance of Novel in the Plain Dealer, and Lord Froth's solemnity is an improvement of Lord Plausible's starch civility in the same play.

The plot is extremely intricate, and exacts from the spectator very deep attention; without it, he will not be able to see how it is unravelled in the catastrophe.

Double Dealer. Act I. Scene IV.

L O R D F R O T H.

There is nothing more unbecoming a man of quality than to laugh;—it is such a vulgar expression of the passions!—Every body can laugh.

Of the same sentiment with respect to laughter, was a late very accomplished nobleman, who, by his own example, justified the doctrine of Lord Froth. A genuine laugh is as difficult, I believe, to be had, as a generous tear.—Nature, by our frame, intended both for the purposes of humanity. There is certainly

much hypocrisy in pretending to assume either ; but the feigned laugh is less censurable than the vile imitation of the crocodile's tears. An assenting half-laugh, or smile, is as much expected from an acquaintance, as a bow, or a shake of the hand. From a Lord C. who wore a mask all his life-time, and taught his only son to do the same, nothing sincere, either in grief or mirth, was to be expected. The man who strives to repress the natural impulse which ridicule excites, never knew the happiness which the tear of pity for the unfortunate bestows.

The Guardian has written an excellent paper, with much pleasantry and humour, on the several sorts of laughers, which he ranges under the following heads : the dimplers, the smilers, the laughers, the grinners, and the horse-laughers. Lord Froth and Lord C. are of the second species. The dimple, says this writer, was, by the ancients, termed the Chian laugh;

laugh ;—and this he gives to the prudes. For my part, though I am not fond of the grin, which is generally practised by snarlers, or those who wish to shew their teeth, nor the Sardonic, which Steele says is the Greek and Roman horse-laugh, yet I am no enemy to what he calls the risus of the antients, which is the same as our hearty laugh. If the sect of dimplers and smilers prevail, we shall have no mirth but what the house of commons or the theatre can give. There we are certain to have a full chorus of laughers.

Act III. Scene the Tenth.

Lady Froth. Brisk.

BRISK.

Besides, your ladyship's coachman having a red face——

When this play was acted at Drury-lane, about five-and-twenty years since, an accidental or wilful blunder of Woodward,

ward, who acted Brisk in a lively and diverting manner, caused such repeated laughter in the theatre, as I scarcely had ever heard.—Mrs. Clive, who acted Lady Froth, had, by mistake, or in a hurry, laid on more rouge than usual; and Brisk, in his criticism on the lady's heroic poem, instead of saying, 'Your coachman having a red face,' said, *Your Ladyship having a red face.* This was no sooner uttered, than peals of laughter were redoubled all over the theatre. Woodward affected to look abashed and confounded; Clive bore the incident heroically. When they retired to the green-room from the stage, they were followed by the players, who expected a scene of violent altercation; but this inimitable actress disappointed them: 'Come, Mr. Woodward,' she gravely said, 'let us rehearse the next scene, lest more blunders should fall out.' Clive was, in Lady Froth, as in the rest of her comic characters, superior to all actresses.

actresses. Happy was that author who could write a part equal to her abilities ! She not only, in general, exceeded the writer's expectation, but all that the most enlightened spectator could conceive. By her encouragement and instructions, and her own industry, Miss Pope is become a valuable actress ; but genius cannot be communicated. Mrs. Green, of all the female players, in comic humour came the nearest to this admirable comedian. It was Mrs. Green's misfortune to live at the same time with Clive. I shall as soon expect to see another Butler, Rabelais, or Swift, as a Clive.

By consent of all the critics, *Love for Love* is esteemed not only the most excellent of Congreve's plays, but one of the best in our language. His characters are drawn with such strength and comprehension, that his comedies are perpetual commentaries on the passions and humours of mankind. The punishment of an unnatural

tural and hard-hearted parent is the moral aim of the poet ; and in this he has, by a judicious conduct of his plot, fully succeeded.

Sir Samson Legend is a finished portrait of an ill-natured wit. Foresight is, I think, a character of humour : there were, it is true, in his time, many persons infected with judicial astrology ; even the name of Dryden has ennobled the insignificant sect ; but Foresight is made up of dreams, nativities, and superstitions of every kind. A ridiculous dread of futurity goes through his whole life ; and, as Bluff, in the Old Batchelor says, ‘ fighting is meat, drink, and cloth, to him,’ so is omen-hunting to Foresight. But the number of the superstitious does not abate the humour of a character : Cervantes wrote his Don Quixote, not with a view of curing one man infected with the spirit of knight-errantry, but a large number of Quixotes. A single character is a monster not worth a writer’s aim.

There

There is surely an absurdity in making the son of a knight a common sailor or foremast man; perhaps the author thought he could not raise so much mirth from the midshipman as a dealer in fore-castle conversation. The character is well calculated to excite much laughter, and to carry on the fable with comic spirit; but Ben is not a humourist; he is, what Angelica terms him, an absolute sea-wit; his being a sailor is a matter of accident. The author, in his prologue, owns he took fire from the manly scenes of the Plain Dealer. Scandal is introduced, as a second Manly, to satirize the vices of the age: he performs his office with the true spirit of a reformer; for he absolutely forgets good manners, and, as to good-nature, that is not to be expected from a censor. Tattle is an original coxcomb, who, in the midst of his prattlings, brags of secrecy. Mr. Pope has
questioned

questioned whether Congreve's fools are really such :

Tell me if Congreve's fools are fools indeed !

The mere fool is no object of comic satire. Though Congreve has given something like wit to his fops, on examination you will find, that it is only the colour of it ; it is the Bristol stone, but not the diamond. Brisk, in the *Double Dealer*, is so lively a coxcomb, that you are surprised into an opinion of his being something better than he is : Tattle is merely whipt-syllabub, and an empty phantom of liveliness.

The ladies in this play are Congreve's ladies, most of them vicious and abandoned. Mrs. Frail, a woman of the town, as he calls her in his *dramatis personæ*, is a main instrument to carry on the plot. Mrs. Fore-sight, *her sister every way**, who is so generous as to forget in the morning, the favours she grants her lovers over-night, is
the

* Love for Love, Act II.

the much-boasted Doris of this writer. If the character were really original, I should not join the cry of its celebrators, for the thought is obvious ; but, if the reader will turn to Otway's *Friendship in Fashion*, he will find Mrs. Foresight is only an improvement of Lady Squeamish.* The author's favourite is Angelica, who at last rewards Valentine with her person and fortune : but that mistress is not an amiable character, who drives her lover to the brink of despair, and is satisfied with nothing less than his signing to his own ruin, as a proof of his passion.

* Tom Brown makes Mrs. Barry, the celebrated actress, a perfect Doris. He says, that she did not know the lover who gave her five guineas overnight, unless he brought the same sum in the morning. But Tom had an insuperable itch for scandal. Tom Brown's Works, vol. III. p. 36, 9th edition.

CHAPTER XLV.

Religion and politics. — Ministers sore about politics.---A great lawyer.---The Revolution and Union.---House of Brunswick. What ministers and magistrates are—knaves or fools.---Mount Vesuvius.---Lady Mary Wortley Montague.---Smith.---His return to the stage ;---death and epitaph. ---Verbruggen.---Bowen and Quin.---Ryan. ---Walker.---Kynaston ;---his family, and various merit.---Mrs. Bracegirdle.---Congreve's assiduities.--Mrs. Bracegirdle courted by the dramatic lovers Rowe and Congreve.--Her excellent character.---Tom Brown.---Curl.---Dr. Arbuthnot.---Why Mrs. Bracegirdle left the stage. --- Wanton Wife.--- Mourning Bride.---Critics. --- Dryden.--- Characters of the Mourning Bride.---Scene in the second act.---Almeria's speech ;---
com-

*compared with the soliloquy of Juliet.---
Taswell, a speaker of tragedy.---Congreve
and the Greek dramatists.---Osmyn's solilo-
quy.---Congreve's tragic obscenity.---Way
of the World: | Plot, characters, actors,
&c.*

Love for Love. Act IV. Scene X.

VALENTINE, [ASSUMING MADNESS.]

What are you for, religion or politics? There is a couple of topics for you, no more like one another than oil and vinegar ; and yet these two, beaten together, make sauce for the whole nation.

SIR Harry Savil, when a French nobleman boasted of the great freedom of conversation they enjoyed in France, observed to him, that his countrymen were deprived of the two only topics which deserved the people's discussion, religion and politics,

Our

Our ministers of late, I do not mean the present,* have been extremely tender on the subject of politics; as for religion, they let that shift for itself. Not many years since, a great lawyer gave it as his opinion, on a public occasion, 'That no honest man talked politics.' This, in a free country, is surely very strange doctrine! Without politics, we should have been deprived of that great blessing, the Revolution; without politics, the kingdoms of Great-Britain would not have been united; nay more, without the same medium, the illustrious House of Brunswick would not have ascended the throne of England. The great lawyer knew this; and yet durst, in the face of day, broach this slavish doctrine. That minister, or magistrate, who would debar Englishmen the liberty of speech, can neither be wise nor honest. The people
who

* November, 1783.

who have a free licence to debate on all topics, are less dangerous to their governors than those who are deprived of that blessing. Mount Vesuvius is never so alarming when its eruptions are free, as when the internal contents are struggling in the crater, and restrained from their regular vent and discharge.—The great lawyer's doctrine is fitter for the meridian of Constantinople than London: if, in that metropolis, the coffee-house politicians presume to arraign the conduct of the minister, they are, says Lady Mary Wortley Montague, immediately dispatched, and the house burnt to the ground. The man whom nobody loves and every body admires, should have recollected, that to politics he owed his seat in parliament; and might possibly have been obliged to an English cobbler for his vote.

In these three comedies, the characters were acted by some of the best comedians

that ever belonged to a theatre. Colley Cibber has drawn most of their characters in a style so expressive of their several abilities, that the memory of them will be transmitted to future times; of some he has made but slight mention. The cause of Smith's leaving the stage he has related; but of his return to it, and death, he has taken no notice. When Betterton seceded from Christopher Rich, and opened, by subscription, a theatre in the Tennis-court, Lincoln's-inn-fields, Smith, who had not acted for several years, was persuaded, by his friends of distinguished rank, to return to the stage. It is said, that the intreaties of his old acquaintance and fellow-labourers, Betterton and Mrs. Barry, had greater weight with him than the influence of his noble friends. Scandal was his first part; continued shouts of applause witnessed the satisfaction which the audience felt on seeing their old friend return to them. But their pleasure was not of long continuance; for
soon

soon after, on the fourth day of *Cyrus the Great*, a new tragedy by Banks, Downes informs us, that Mr. Smith was taken ill and died. Chetwood relates, that, being seized with the cramp in the night, he jumped out of his bed, and was so long walking about his chamber in the dark, that he caught cold, which ended in a distemper that brought him to his grave.

Booth, in his elegant Latin epitaph on Smith, speaks of his professional abilities, his just administration of the stage, his affability and condescension, as if he had been perfectly acquainted with him. But, when Smith died, Booth was a Westminster scholar, and in his fourteenth year; the character of this eminent comedian must have been drawn up from such information as the writer, in his riper years, obtained.

Verbruggen, who was employed in no less than four of Congreve's plays, was an actor of more merit than Cibber was wil-

ling to allow ; for, in his Apology, he slightly mentions him as a person much inferior to the actors whose praises he had recorded. I shall hereafter have occasion to speak of him more fully. Bowen, who played Setter in the Old Batchelor, Jeremy in Love for Love, and Witwou'd in the Way of the World, a comedian of some merit, remarkable for the loudness of his voice, was unhappy in a choleric disposition. This man fell into company with Quin, at a public-house much frequented at that time by players, near Clare-market. He reproached Quin for leaving Drury-lane playhouse ; and for his acting the part of Tamerlane, at the theatre in Lincoln's-inn-fields, once only. Quin, in return, told him that Mr. Jonson, who had acted Jacomo, in the Libertine Destroyed, a single night, had greatly surpassed him, who had often played the part. After some farther altercation, Bowen retired to a neighbouring tavern, and sent for Mr. Quin. Upon his entering the room, Bowen shut the door, and drew his

his sword, bidding him draw. Quin remonstrated against this sudden violence, but in vain; and, in defending his own life, mortally wounded Bowen; who, when his rage was cooled by the loss of blood, owned that he had been the aggressor. I have not the trial before me, and therefore cannot be absolutely sure that I have minutely described this unhappy business; but the main part is, I am confident, according to matter of fact. Quin was tried at the Old Bailey, and honourably acquitted. This accident fell out in 1718. It is remarkable that Ryan, about a month after, underwent a like trial at the same place, for killing a man, in his own defence, at a public-house; and was also acquitted with honour. Walker, the original Macheath, was brought to the same bar, I believe at a period not very distant, for the murder of a bailiff: he was acquitted by the jury, but whether with the same honourable circumstances, I know not.

A a 3

Kynaston,

Kynaſton, who is characteriſed by Cibber as a very original performer, was taken ill during the firſt representation of the Double Dealer. When he retired from the ſtage is not known; I find him among the dramatis perſonæ of Dryden's Love Triumphant, acted ſoon after Congreve's Double Dealer, and in Banks's tragedy of Cyrus the Great.

To the excellent portrait of Kynaſton, drawn by the maſterly hand of Cibber, in his Apology, by the kind communication of a deſcendant, Edward Kynaſton, Eſq. I am enabled to add the following particulars :

Edward Kynaſton was born at Ofweſtry, in Shropſhire, 20th April, 1643, and was married in March, 1661. He had fix ſons and eleven daughters, of which only one ſon and two daughters lived to be of age. He was buried in Covent-Garden church-yard, July 30th, 1712.

‘ He

‘He was a younger son of a younger branch of an old family in Shropshire, descended from very remote ancestry, viz. from Blethevyn ap Kynwyn, Prince of Powis. It is generally supposed that he left his country very young.’

All the information this gentleman could obtain from Mr. Garrick, relative to his ancestor, was, that he had heard old Jonson the comedian speak with very great respect of him, both as a gentleman and a performer.

From the ‘Roscius Anglicanus’ of Downes, a contemporary, we are informed, that Mr. Kynaston acted several female parts after the Restoration; that being very young, he made a complete stage beauty; that he acted his female parts so well, particularly Arthiope and Aglaura, that it has since been disputed, amongst the judicious, whether any woman that succeeded him, touched the audience so sensibly as he.

Mr. Kynaston shewed me a fine miniature of his ancestor the actor, in which manly intelligence of feature seemed to be happily united with the most engaging softness.

Mrs. Bracegirdle was the favourite actress of Congreve and Rowe. In the several lovers they gave her, in their plays, they expressed their own passion for her. In *Tamerlane*, Rowe courted her *Selima* in the person of *Axalla*; in the *Fair Penitent*, he was the *Horatio* to her *Lavinia*; and in *Ulysses*, the *Telemachus* to *Bracegirdle's Semanthe*. Congreve insinuated his addresses in his *Valentine* to her *Angelica*, in *Love for Love*; in his *Osmyn* to her *Almeria*, in the *Mourning Bride*; and, lastly, in his *Mirabel* to her *Millamant*, in the *Way of the World*. *Mirabel*, the fine gentleman of the play, is, I believe, not very distant from the real character of Congreve.

Mrs.

Mrs. Bracegirdle, says Cibber, had a lively aspect, with such a glow of health and cheerfulness in her countenance, that she inspired every body that was not past it, with desire. Scarce an audience saw her that were not half of them her lovers, without a suspected favourite amongst them; and this power over the public he attributes to her being guarded in her private character. But the assiduous courtship which Congreve paid this actress, did not pass unnoticed. He was constantly in her lodgings, and often rode out with her.— He dined with her every day, says Tom Brown; and visited her in public and private*. Though this author indulges the spirit of scandal to excess, yet the tendresse of Congreve for Bracegirdle was a common subject of conversation. In a book, called the Comparison between the two Stages, published in 1702, her character is treated with

* Tom Brown, Vol. III.

with illiberality. The author, to some tolerable observations on plays and players, has joined a most outrageous spirit of invective. It will be a sufficient vindication of Mrs. Bracegirdle, that she visited persons of the most unblemished character as well as most exalted rank in the female world. The charms of her conversation were not inferior, we may reasonably suppose, to those of her person; for she was visited, as Clive is now, by persons of rank and taste, to a very advanced old age. That Congreve was often at her house, to the last year of his life, must be attributed to a friendship contracted for an actress, who had given life and spirit to some of his favourite characters; and likewise to that, and that only, we must place his bequeathing her the sum of 200l. When Curl, whom Dr. Arbuthnot termed one of the new terrors of death, from his constantly printing every eminent person's life and last will, published an advertisement of

Memoirs

Memoirs of the Life of Congreve, she interested herself so far in his reputation, as to demand a sight of the book in MS. This was refused. She then asked, by what authority his Life was written, and what pieces contained in it were genuine? Upon being told, there would be several of his essays, letters, &c. she answered, 'Not one single sheet of paper, I dare say.' And in this she was a true prophet; for, in that book, there is not a line of Congreve, which had not been printed before. Arbuthnot endeavoured, from friendship to the deceased, to prevent any imposition on the public, in the name of Congreve, and met with impertinent abuse from the person who called himself the author of *Memoirs of the Life, Writings, and Amours, of William Congreve, Esq.*

The cause of Mrs. Bracegirdle's leaving the stage in the prime of life, Cibber knew; but, for an obvious reason, he does not in his *Apology* relate it. When his book was published,

published, she was then living, and would not have been pleased to have it told, that the preference given to Mrs. Oldfield obliged her to retire from the theatre. I have formerly seen a pamphlet, in which the history of this dispute, between these theatrical ladies, was minutely related. Oldfield rising greatly in the opinion of the public, as an actress of merit, both in tragedy and comedy, her friends claimed a right to appoint a day for her benefit before Mrs. Bracegirdle's. The friends of the latter maintained that she had a prior right, not only from long prescription, but superior merit. It was at last settled, by the contending parties, that the rival queens should fix on a favourite character, to be acted by them alternately : the part chosen was Mrs. Brittle, in the Wanton Wife. The preference of the public appeared so strongly in favour of Oldfield, that Bracegirdle never afterwards, except once, entered the playhouse as an actress.

The

The time of her secession is not justly marked by Cibber, who fixes it to the year 1710. Mrs. Bracegirdle and Mrs. Barry had retired some years, when they both returned to the stage, to act for the benefit of their old friend, Mr. Betterton, in Congreve's *Love for Love*, April 7, 1709. The *Royal Convert*, of Rowe, was acted soon after the Union (1707), as we may learn from Ethelinda's prophecy in the conclusion of the play. The part of Ethelinda was acted by Oldfield; from which circumstance alone we may conclude, that Mrs. Bracegirdle was not then on the stage, as Rowe, otherwise, would certainly have given it to her. Some few years before her death, Mrs. Bracegirdle retired to the house of W. Chute, Esq. and died, in 1748, in the eighty-fifth year of her age. She bequeathed her effects to her niece, who lived with her, and for whom she expressed a great regard.

The

The Mourning Bride of Congreve was originally acted in 1697. To see a tragedy, written by the best comic author of the age, drew together vast shoals of writers and critics by profession. It is traditionally said, that Dryden was present the first night of representation; that he was struck and surprised with the first act; but that, before the end of the second, he declared he was satisfied. It was, according to Downes, acted thirteen nights successively. It is still a very favourite play, especially with the ladies. The fable is not ill chosen, nor can I think the principal characters are weakly drawn. In the part of the King, the author has indeed mixed pompous phraseology with an outrageous vehemence of temper; yet still he is a character. Almeria is a fine picture of conjugal affection and persisting fidelity. Zara's noble and exalted mind, hurried away by ungovernable passions, renders her an excellent

lent personage to excite pity and terror. —
Osmyn is brave and generous, undismayed
by adversity, and resigned to Providence.

The plot is intricate, and must be observed with the most scrupulous attention, or it will escape the spectator. That the contrivers of destruction ought to fall by their own arts, is the apparent moral of the Mourning Bride.

Dr. Johnson commends the following part of a scene, in the second act of this tragedy, as the most poetical paragraph in the whole mass of English poetry :

A L M E R I A.

It was a fancy'd noise, for all is hush'd.

L E O N O R A.

It bore the accents of a human voice.

A L M E R I A.

It was thy fear,—or else some transient wind,
Whistling through hollows of the vaulted ile.
We'll listen.——

L E O N O R A.

—— Hark ! ——

A L M E R I A.

No, all is hush'd, and still as death.—'Tis dreadful!
 How rev'rend is the face of this tall pile,
 Whose antient pillars rear their marble heads
 To bear aloft its arch'd and pond'rous roof,
 By its own weight made stedfast and immoveable,
 Looking tranquillity!—It strikes an awe
 And terror to my aching sight.—The tombs
 And monumental caves of death look cold,
 And shoot a chilness to my trembling heart!
 Give me thy hand—and let me hear thy voice!—
 Nay, quickly speak to me, and let me hear
 Thy voice:—my own affrights me with its echoes!

The passage certainly deserves much
 praise; but I would beg leave to remark,
 that Almeria's taking notice of the archi-
 tecture of the building, —

By its own weight made stedfast and immoveable,
 Looking tranquillity, —

is a calm sentiment, and not of a piece
 with the rest. The fears of Almeria are
 raised by objects in her sight, which assist
 the fancy: but the successive images of
 terror,

terror, which Shakspeare gives his Juliet when she is about to drink the sleeping-potion given her by the frier, proceeding from a tender mind alarmed and apprehensive, are, in my opinion, equal, if not superior, to this boasted passage of Congreve:

JULIET,

[WHEN ALONE, AND AFTER RECEIVING FROM THE FRIER THE SLEEPING-DRAUGHT.]

————— Come, phial! —

What if it be a poison, which the frier
Subtly hath minister'd to have me dead,
Lest in this marriage he should be dishonour'd,
Because he marry'd me before to Romeo?—
I fear it is!—And yet methinks it should not,
For he hath still been try'd a holy man.—
How, if, when I am laid upon the tomb,
I wake before the time that Romeo
Comes to redeem me? —there's a fearful point!
Shall I not then be stifled in the vault,
To whose foul mouth no healthsome air breathes
in,

And there be strangled ere my Romeo comes?
Or, if I live, is it not very like,

The horrible conceit of death and night,

Together with the terror of the place,
 Where, for these many hundred years, the bones
 Of all my bury'd ancestors are pack'd, —
 Where bloody Tybalt, yet but green in earth,
 Lies fest'ring in his shroud ; where, as they say,
 At some hours in the night, spirits resort ;—

Or, if I wake, shall I not be distraught,
 (Invironed with all these hideous fears,)
 And madly play with my forefather's joints ;
 And pluck the mangled Tybalt from his shroud ;
 And, in this rage, with some great kinsman's bones,
 As with a club, dash out my desp'rate brains !—
 O look ! methinks I see my cousin's ghost
 Seeking out Romeo.——Stay, Tybalt, stay !—
 Romeo, I come ! —————

The interview between Osmyn and Almeria, in the tombs, has generally an awkward effect, from their both falling at the same time ; and, while poor Leonora is endeavouring to support them, a new personage, Heli, arrives ; and, his surprise not being generally well represented, a contemptuous laugh succeeds. I remember that Tafwell, a comic actor of a particular

ticular cast, fancied he could speak tragedy as well as any man, and begged Mr. Fleetwood, the manager, to trust him with the part of Heli; but the player and the patentee both repented the frolic, for Taswell was born only to excite mirth; and surely a merrier audience, at his lisping out the lines of Heli, was never seen.

As this meeting of the husband and the wife is lengthened out to tediousness, great part of it is curtailed by the prompter. Our author, who certainly felt the passion of love with energy, though he was not always very happy in expressing it, has thrown into this dialogue some very tender and affecting thoughts. Few of our playwrights were acquainted with the Greek dramatists: Congreve was a polite scholar; he was well read in them.—Several passages in the admirable scene between Orestes and Electra, in the tragedy of that name, where he discovers himself to his sister, may be traced in the interview of

Osmyn and Almeria. I mean that part of *Electra*, where the Greek player, Porus, in acting that character, bore in his arms an urn which contained the ashes of his own son, and melted, by the excess of his pathetic grief, all Athens into tears.

The prison-scene, in the third act, is made of consequence by the incident of Osmyn's finding a paper, written by his pious father, with a prayer for his son; and the reflections on the word 'heaven' being torn from the petition, resulting from situation, are very natural. Osmyn's being roused to a sense of his people's wrongs, by his friend Heli, is the effect of generous passion, and nobly affecting. Garrick, through the whole part of Osmyn, was a skilful actor, but his inexhaustible fire had here room to operate to advantage.

In the prison-dialogue between Osmyn and Almeria, many expressions of the husband to the wife are extremely gross, and very disgraceful to the writer. The talking
ing

ing obscenely, in tragedy, is peculiar to the English dramatists; I do not remember to have read, in any of the French tragedies, a single line that intrenches upon good-manners. Dryden, Otway, and Lee, were continually offending against decency; and Congreve, whose fancy was warm and wanton, has imitated his licentious predecessors; nay, in one or two passages of this last scene, almost surpassed them:

[Then Garcia shall lie panting on thy bosom, &c.

Zara's surprising Almeria and Osmyn in conference, produces an incident, which, from situation and circumstance, is rather of the comic than the tragic strain. One princess jealous of another's superior charms may indeed be made a serious subject, as in the Distressed Mother; but the expressions of anger and resentment, in this captive queen, seldom fail to excite laughter. Mrs. Porter, who was deservedly admired in Zara, and Mrs. Pritchard, her successor in that part, could not, with all their skill,

prevent the risibility of the audience in this interview. Mrs. Siddons alone preserves the dignity and truth of character, unmixed with any incitement to mirth, from countenance, expression, or action.

If the composition of this tragedy, with respect to sentiment, passion, and diction, were equal to the well-studied œconomy of the fable, it might challenge a rank with our most frequented tragedies. But, notwithstanding we have, in some places, a false blaze of words and an exuberant swell of passion, blended with images far-fetched and unpleasing, there are scenes in the Mourning Bride, which never fail to attract the attention and engage the heart of the spectator; the happy conclusion will for ever cause joy and exultation in the audience, who will perpetually dismiss the players with the loudest approbation.

The first characters of this play are generally disliked by the principal actors: their taste is too refined, it seems, to relish
the

the language of it; and we seldom see Osmyrn, Almeria, Zara, and the King, supported according to the strength of a company. But there is no discretion in being wiser than our customers, who are, at the same time, our judges. Booth, Oldfield, Porter, and Mills the elder, were long the favourites of the public in Congreve's pantomime, as Churchill terms it. Mr. Garrick did not, on account of turgid expression, reject the noble passion of Osmyrn. At the same time, Miss Bellamy was a pleasing Almeria; Mrs. Pritchard and Berry supported Zara and the King.

When Oldfield, a few years before her death, resigned the Mourning Bride, Mrs. Thurmond, by the instructions of Booth in that part, became a favourite actress in tragedy. She was a rising performer at Lincoln's-inn-fields, when, about the year 1720, Booth, Wilks, and Cibber, pleased with her manner of acting, engaged her at an advanced income. In 1733 she retired,

in discontent, to Goodman's Fields, where honest Giffard gave her a kind reception.— Her first part, at his theatre, was the Mourning Bride, which she acted with applause several nights. In a year or two she returned to Drury-lane; and retired altogether from the theatre above forty years since,

For her own benefit, the comic Clive put on the royal robes of Zara: she found them too heavy, and, very wisely, never wore them afterwards.

The Way of the World was Mr. Congreve's next play. The moral intention of the author, in Love for Love, was the reward of constancy in the lover, and the punishment of cruelty in the parent: in his last comedy, he proposes to guard mankind against matrimonial falsehood.—

The plot is singularly intricate,

Mirabel, the fine gentleman of the play, is a successful lover of the Widow Languish, daughter of Lady Wishfor't, to whom

whom he pays mock-addresses, to cover his honourable courtship of Millamant, her niece, a lady of large fortune. To prevent the discovery of the expected consequences of his intrigue with the Widow Languish, he prevails on her to marry his acquaintance Mr. Fainall; but, to guard the lady against the apprehended tyranny of her husband, Mirabel persuades her to make over to him her whole estate real in trust. —Mrs. Marwood, the friend and mistress of Fainall, secretly in love with Mirabel, discovers to the old lady his pretended courtship, which begets her irreconcilable hatred. To prevent Lady Wishfor't's entering into an improper match from resentment, Mirabel marries his servant, Waitwell, to Foible, her waiting-woman; and, by her assistance, hopes to impose him on the old lady for his uncle. By Marwood's overhearing the discourse which passed between Wishfor't and Foible, and the latter's with Mrs. Fainall, the scheme of

of the sham marriage is discovered ; the old lady is in a rage with her attendant ; and Waitwell, her husband, is arrested, and released on bail. Fainall, on his discovery that he was made a cuckold by anticipation, is enraged, and tries to oblige Lady Wishfor't to make over her estate to him, with several other hard conditions, from which she is unexpectedly delivered by the agency of Mirabel, who, by proving the infidelity of Fainall and Marwood, and producing the deed of gift in trust, is rewarded with Millamant, which puts an end to the play.

Though this comedy does not present us with so glowing and so pleasing a picture of life and manners as *Love for Love*, yet the reader will be surprised at the great power and skill of the writer. To delineate the manners of a mere coxcomb, is not so difficult ; but to give the picture of a man who incurs ridicule from affectation of wit ; one who says so many things like
wit,

wit, that the common observer mistakes them for it, is not a cheap business : Wit-wou'd cost the writer more pains than ten Tattles. Whether Petulant be a character of humour, I am at a loss to determine. B. Jonson defines humour to be a quality of the mind which draws the passions and affections all one way. Congreve says, I believe truly, that humour is as hard to be defined as wit ; and therefore declares, he dares venture no farther than to tell us what it is not. Amongst his negatives he places habit and affectation. But how are they to be discriminated from true humour ? There is, in my opinion, in that which is called humour, something of both these qualities. Morose, in Ben Jonson's Silent Woman, is quoted, by all critics on the subject, as a true character of humour : but how did he acquire that hatred to all speech and noise but his own, if not from an affectation of singularity ? nor can I see how he could possibly arrive

at

at that degree of moroseness, but by long custom and habit. Dryden defines humour to be a ridiculous extravagance in conversation, wherein one man differs from another. After having quoted Morose as a perfect character of humour, and more than insinuated that humour in itself is something uncommon, he soon after tells us, that there are no less than nine or ten parts of humour in the same comedy of the Silent Woman. If we subscribe to Locke's opinion, that we have no innate principles, we must likewise allow, that we have no innate humours. Much more depends on the construction of the body, than we are at all times aware of. The organs of men, by which they receive outward impressions, are differently formed: from this alone the great variety of perceptions proceeds; and these, by degrees, produce distinction of humour and character. To make the reader amends for my presumption, in giving my opinion on this difficult subject,

I will

I will subjoin Mr. Congreve's opinion of humour, in his letter to Dennis, which he modestly says serves him for one: 'A singular and unavoidable manner of doing or saying any thing peculiar and natural to one man only, by which his speech and actions are distinguished from those of other men.' And this is certainly agreeable to Ben Jonson's definition of humour, though not expressed in the same words; and not very different from Dryden's — Corbin Morris, in his Essay on Wit and Humour, though he assumes a superiority over Congreve, does not, in my opinion, vary from him or B. Jonson: 'A humourist is a person in real life, obstinately attached to sensible peculiar oddities, of his genuine growth, which appear in his temper and conduct.' Morris's man of humour is really the man of wit and pleasantry, who can play with the foibles of another; and Foote says, in his Essay on the
English

English Comedy, that the humourist is the food of the man of humour.

Sir Wilful Witwou'd is discriminated from any other fox-hunter by no peculiarity except his wilfulness; whether this will entitle him to a character of humour I leave to the critics.

Millamant is a most agreeable coquette, with a great share of sense and good-nature. She is, indeed, the most unexceptionable character in the play. The rest of the women are what I call Congreve's ladies. Strange! that a man who conversed so much in the polite world, could scarcely find a female amongst his acquaintance, of genuine worth and unblemished honour, fit to engraft in his comedies! In Lady Wishfor't's style, Mrs. Marwood and Mrs. Fainall had been *sophisticated*; a misfortune which the old lady would willingly incur in an honourable way. Foible is a go-between, or bawd; and Mincing is ready to swear to any thing, for her *ladyship's service*.

Con-

Congreve was so well assured of the success of the *Way of the World*, that in his prologue he seems to defy the critics; for he calls upon them to damn his play, if they do not approve it. With an affected modesty, he is entirely resigned to their pleasure :

He owns with toil he wrought the following scenes;
But, if they're naught, ne'er spare him for his pains.
Damn him the more; have no commiseration
For dulness on mature deliberation.

He swears he'll not resent one hiss'd-off scene;
Nor like those peevish wits his play maintain;
Who, to assert their sense, your taste arraign, }

— — — — —
In short,—one play shall, with your leave to shew it,
Give you one instance of a passive poet,
Who to your judgment yields all resignation,
To save or damn after your own discretion.

Yet, after all this self-denial, we are told, in positive terms, by Dennis, that this play 'was hissed by barbarous fools in the acting; and this treatment justly raised

raised so much indignation in the writer, that he quitted the stage in disdain. How is it possible to reconcile this account with Congreve's own words, in his dedication of the play to the Earl of Montague?—
‘That it succeeded on the stage was almost beyond my expectation.’ Several years after this he accepted a share in one of the theatres: upon what account, except his writing of plays, the share could be offered him, I am not competent to guess. That this play was, very soon after its first exhibition, in favour with the public, is certain. I long since heard, indeed, that a particular scene, in the fifth act, between Lady Willfort and Foible, was at first maltreated by the audience; and perhaps for that very reason which the author would most value himself upon, a close imitation of his great idol, Ben Jonson. Let any body compare this dialogue, between the lady and her waiting woman, with the first scene of the *Alchemist*, between

tween the two sharpeners, Face and Subtle, and he will find the reproaches of the former to the latter, on the miserable state in which he found him in St. Paul's, are strongly imitated; they are the closest resemblances that can be found in any dramatic writings. This, borrowed from Ben, the critics of those days, it seems, did not approve; they thought Congreve rich enough in his own treasures, without being obliged to have recourse to others.

It must not be to the condemnation of the whole, or any part of the Way of the World, that we must attribute this writer's quitting the drama. A man, who, about ninety years since, when money was at least twice the value it is now, enjoyed places to the amount of 800l. per annum, could have little temptation to continue his authorship. Besides, the warm fun of the Marlborough family, by the elder branch of which he was particularly distinguished, in all probability relaxed

laxed his poetical nerves. His patrons in vain complained of his indolence, after they had given him the means to be idle.

The great skill of the poet, in conducting his plot, is no where more conspicuous than in the second act of the play. Two artful people, who, from satiety, are heartily tired of each other, and only from convenience and mutual interest keep up a correspondence, accidentally quarrel; and, from a collision of their passions, they not only unfold their own actions and characters, but open the preceding transactions necessary to be known by the audience. The scene between Marwood and Fainall I have always considered as a masterpiece of writing, which cannot be read or admired too much. It is indeed a happy imitation of Ben Jonson's manner of drawing the incidents of the fabie, and explanation of characters by sudden alteration.

No decoy-duck to wheedle you a top-terrace
the play in a mark

ACT III.

MRS. MARWOOD, ALONE.

[After hearing the conversation of Lady Wishfort and Foible, and Mrs. Fallow and Foible.]

O man, man, woman, woman! the devil is an ass. If I were a painter, I would draw him like an idiot, a driveller, with a bib and bells.

This is a good commentary upon a passage in Shakspeare's *Timon*, which puzzled his greatest commentators:

TIMON, ALONE.

[After being denied money by Sempronius.]

The devil knew not what he did when he made man politic. He crossed himself by it; and *I cannot but think, in the end, the villainies of man will set him free.*

In the fourth act of the *Way of the World*, the matrimonial articles, settled between Mirabel and Millamant, are so judiciously framed, that they will serve, with a little fashionable alteration, for a lasting model to all happy-marriage contractors.

ACT IV. Scene V.

MIRABEL.

No decoy-duck to wheedle you a fop-scambling to the play in a mask.

C c 2

When

When the mode of females going masked to a play originated, is not, I believe, very easy to determine. We may be almost certain that it was not a practice before the Civil Wars, not in fashion till some time after the Restoration. I find these masked ladies mentioned often in the prologues and epilogues to Dryden's, Lee's, and Otway's, plays. The custom was doubtless imported from France; and I believe we may, with some probability, fix its introduction to the year 1666 or 1667. The many disturbances which these disguised females continually caused in the pit and boxes, prevented women of character from going to the playhouse; and such was the continual scandal arising from it, that the sober and grave part of the town were often, by these tumults, deprived of theatrical entertainments. — Constant uproars and riots called loudly for public redress: at length, after this nuisance had been endured for near forty years, an accidenta

accidental dispute, concerning one Mrs. Fawkes, which ended in a duel, produced an entire prohibition of women's wearing masks in the playhouse (I suppose, by order of the Lord Chamberlain) about the 5th of Queen Anne.

Act V.

Lady Withfort; Mrs. Marwood.

MRS. MARWOOD.

— And from thence be transferred to the hands, nay, to the throats and lungs, of hawkers with voices more libentious than the loud flounder-man's.

From King William's days to almost the end of George I. there was a fellow, who distinguished himself, above all others, in crying flounders in the streets of London. — His voice was loud, but not unmusical: the tones, in lengthening out the word flounders, were so happily varied, that people heard him with surprise and some degree of pleasure. Walker, about the year 1725, revived, in the summer-season, a play called Massianello, or a Fisherman a Prince,

taken, I believe, from Durbey's History of
 Massanetto: he entered the stage crying
 flounders; his imitation of the famous
 flounder-man, so very like the original,
 that the applauses, on this trifling occa-
 sion, were very loud and redoubled. In mid-
 dle of those comedians, who, within these
 fifty or sixty years, have distinguished
 themselves in Congreve's comedies, most
 of whom I have often seen act, something
 should be said. The Old Batchelor of
 Drury Lane was Harp, a good low cog-
 median, but whose understanding was not
 of that size to give force to the fantastic
 poignancy of expression, the whimsical
 struggles of amorous passion, or the vio-
 lent rage on discovered folly, in Heart-
 well; all which Quin perfectly concei-
 ved, and justly represented many years at
 Lincoln's inn-fields and Covent-garden.—
 The Belmour of Wilks was the finished
 and polite libertine; that of Walker was
 the bold and manly rake. The Captain
 Bluffe

Bluff of B² Jonson was as complete a piece of acting as I ever saw: his person was against him; for he was old and thin when I first saw him, which is now above fifty-two years since; and I remember I thought him ill chosen for a bully; but his exquisite performance soon cured me of my doubts, and the whole audience of any diffidence of his abilities. Colley Cibber's Fondlewife was much and justly admired and applauded, though some critics greatly preferred Dogget's portrait of old dotting impotence to his. From a recollection of Cibber's manner, Foote acted a scene or two of Fondlewife better than any characters, except such as he wrote purposely for himself. Hippisley played Fondlewife in a manner original and not much inferior to Cibber. Mrs. Horton, who was famous for coquets, was the Belinda of Drury-lane; and Mrs. Younger, the sister of Mrs. Bicknell, celebrated in the Tatler and Spectator, for variety of humorous parts, was an actress

much more deservedly followed him than
 many other comic characters, especially the
 Country Wife. But Mrs. Younger was a
 general actress, and sometimes appeared in
 tragedy, though, I think, not to advantage.
 Much about the time she left the stage, she
 was married to the honourable Mr. Finch,
 who had, above twenty years before, been
 stabbed, in a quarrel, by the famous Sally
 Salisbury. In *Love for Love*, I saw Wilks, in his
 old age, play the part of Valentine with all
 the spirit and fire of youth. Two years
 after, Colley Cibber, who had been long
 the faithful Tattle of Drury-lane, acted
 Ben when he was past sixty; it was said
 that he copied Dogget, the original; but
 neither his voice nor look were suitable
 to the rough animation of a sailor. His
 acting Ben was a piece of managers
 craft. Joe Miller, who was a lively co-
 mic actor, and a favourite of the town
 in Ben, and many other diverting cha-
 racters,

takers, had by some mean economy of
the villagers, been driven from Drury
Lane and Goodman's fields; When they
were obliged to recall him to his old
situation, they imagined that Ben, acted
first by Cibber, would bring several full
houses; And that the public's being af-
terwards excited to see their friends Joe
Miller, in the same character, would double
their profits. I believe they were disap-
pointed in their expectations; for Cibber,
though he acted Ben but two or three
times, took off the edge of appetite to see
Miller. Shepherd was a most spirited
actor of the farcical Sir Sampson Legend.
My old acquaintance, Jack Dunstall, for
many years played this part, as well as
several others in comedy, with truth and
nature. Jack had, indeed, the fault of cor-
responding by looks, sometimes with his ac-
quaintance in the pit. His Hodge, John
Moody, Lockit, Sir Jealous Traffic, Job-
son, and many other characters of the
same

same cast, will be remembered with pleasure by his old friends, whom he often delighted with many a jovial song, and especially that famous one on the sea-victory obtained by Admiral Ruffel over the French at La Hogue; this he sang harmoniously, and with a true English spirit. Dunstall was a member of several very respectable societies, and was valued, by all who knew him, for his honesty and good nature.

Theophilus Cibber's first wife acted Miss Rose in an agreeable and lively manner. Clive gave such a romping spirit and humorous vivacity to the wild girl, that even Abington's childish simplicity and playful awkwardness cannot make us forget her.

The theatre of Covent-garden, in December 1732, opened with the Way of the World. The scenes were new, and excellently well painted; all the decorations were suited to the grandeur and magnificence of the building. The boxes were, on this occasion, raised to half a guinea, the pit

pit to five shillings, the galleries in propor-
 tion. The parts were thus distributed, as
 I remember not to have Mirabel by Mr. Ryan;
 Quin, Fainall; no Witwoud, Chapman;
 Penlake, Neal; Sir Walsby Witwoud,
 Hippisley, Waitwell, Pinkethman, Ison
 of the famous Pinky; Lady Withfort,
 Mrs. Eggleton; Millamant, Mrs. Youn-
 ger; Marwood, Mrs. Hallam; Mrs.
 Fainall, Mrs. Buchanan; Edible, Mrs.
 Stephens; afterwards Mrs. Rich. Quin
 was a judicious speaker of Fainall's sen-
 timents, but heavy in action and deport-
 ment; Walker, who succeeded him, under-
 stood and expressed the assumed spirit and
 real insolence of this artful character much
 better. Ryan was greatly inferior to the ac-
 complished Mirabel of Wilks; and Chap-
 man's Witwoud, though not so finished as
 that of Colley Cibber, was of his own draw-
 ing, and very comic. His quickness of speech
 resembled the articulate volubility of Mr.
 King, who is likewise a very pleasing repre-
 senter

center of Witwou'd; and, as I shall not,
 perhaps, have an opportunity, in any other
 place of this book, to speak of this worthy
 man and excellent actor, I shall here pay
 him the just tribute due to his character.
 As an honest servant to the proprietors, en-
 gaged in a variety of parts, no man ever
 exerted his abilities to greater satisfaction
 of the public, or consulted the interest of
 his employers with more cordiality and
 assiduity. As a manager, intrusted to su-
 perintend, bring forward, and revive, dra-
 matic pieces, his judgment was sound, and
 his attention unwearied. When he thought
 proper to quit his post of theatrical direc-
 tor, those of his own profession regretted
 the loss of a friend and companion, whose
 humanity and candour they had experi-
 enced, and on whose impartiality and jus-
 tice they knew they could firmly depend.
 Both a character of the great actor, Smith,
 may be applied with justice to Mr. King.
 'By his impartial management of the stage,
 and

and the affability of his temper, he merited the respect and esteem of all within the theatre, the applause of those without, and the good will and love of all mankind.

Hippisley, who acted Sir Wilful Witwou'd, was not an auricular imitator of another's manner; he was solely directed by the force of his own genius. Though he did not, in Sir Wilful, present to the spectator such a laughable figure of a superannuated lubber as Harper, his rival at Drury-lane, yet he pleased by dint of comic spirit and natural humour. Neal's *Petulant* was diverting, whimsical, and odd-though I believe, not so critically just as Mr. Baddeley's.

Mrs. Younger's *Millamant* was spirited; but Oldfield's fine figure, attractive manner, harmonious voice, and elegance in dress, in which she excelled all her predecessors and successors, except Mrs. Abington, left her without a rival. Mrs. Eggleston was a comic actress much admired by the

the best judges: John Duke of Argyll, who was a frequenter of the theatre, and a constant friend to the actors, took a particular pleasure in seeing Mrs. Eggleton on the stage. With a great share of merit, she was extremely diffident, and never attempted a new character, but with the utmost apprehension of her failing to please the audience. Mrs. Eggleton, like another Ariadne, died enamoured of Bacchus, about the year 1734. Though, after the *Way of the World*, Congreve wrote no plays, he brought on the stage a masque called the *Judgement of Paris*; and *Semele*, an opera. The music to the first was composed by Purcell, Eccles, Singer, and Weldon. It was revived at Drury-lane, about fifty years since, with fine scenes and decorations. This piece, the author of *Biographia Dramatica* says, is often performed to music, by way of an oratorio. The same author, speaking of *Semele*, says, that this

short

short piece was performed, and printed in quarto, in 1707. The success of the opera is not mentioned by this or any other writer. The story is told by Ovid, in his *Metamorphosis*, but the author has made an alteration in the fable, more conformable to the characters of the opera. Congreve has shewn himself a scholar and a poet in this dramatic piece, and I should imagine, if revived, with proper music and good singers, it would please in representation. The fable of this opera, which is not, as the *Biographia Dramatica* says, a short poem, is well conducted. The measure of the airs is various, and suited to the situations of the persons dramatis. The author accounts for having no regard to rhyme, or equality of measure, in that part of the dialogue designed for recitative; which he says is only a more tunable speaking, and a kind of prose in music. Mr. John Beard and Mr. Joseph Vernon excelled

excelled greatly in recitative, by giving uncommon force of expression to the passions of love, grief, and resentment.

Of almost all Congreve's poems, except his Ode on Mrs. Hunt, Dr. Johnson speaks with a marked contempt. The Birth of the Muse he calls a wretched fiction. But Addison, in the dedication of his *Pax Guilielmi auspiciis Europæ reddita*, to Montague, bestows as much immoderate praise on the muse of Congreve as abuse on all the writers of his time who employed their pens on the subject of peace: *Quod si Congrevius ille tuus, divino quo solet furore correptus, materiam hanc non exornasset, vix tanti esset ipsa pax, ut illa lætaremur, tot perditissimis poetis tam misere decantata.*——

This encomium is unworthy of Addison, and indeed is nothing else than absolute fustian; such it will appear to every reader, in English as well as Latin: 'Had not your Congreve, seized with his usual fit of divine madness, condescended to cele-

celebrate the subject, *the peace itself would not have been of such importance to us, nor could we, indeed, have rejoiced in it, considering how vilely it has been debased by the pens of despicable scribblers.*

Amongst the poems of Prior, on King William's military achievements, Addison might, with ease, have selected a better subject for his panegyric than Congreve's *Birth of the Mule*; but Prior was, I believe, in no part of his life, a favourite of Addison.

Before Congreve wrote his last comedy, he published a formal defence of the four plays he had then written; in which there is some wit, a good deal of learning, many unwilling concessions, and no small share of dissingenuity. Congreve's pride was hurt by Collier's attack on plays which all the world had admired and commended; and no hypocrite shewed more rancour and resentment, when unmasked, than this author, so greatly celebrated for sweetness of temper and elegance of manners. It must be con-

feffed, that Collier, in his View of the Stage, had gone too far ; he had forgotten the old axiom of *Ab abusu ad usum non valet consequentia* ; he would listen to nothing less than the entire abolition of stage-amusements and even of music itself ; he resembled too much the root-and-branch men, in the days of Charles I. who, not satisfied with reforming abuses, determined to lay the axe to the root of monarchy, and destroy our constitution in church and state.

I shall quote a passage from Congreve's Defence, which I think worthy of the reader's perusal :

‘ To what end has he made such a bugbear of the theatre ? Why should he possess the minds of weak and melancholy people with such frightful ideas of a poor play, unless to sour the humours of the people of most leisure, that they might be more apt to misemploy their vacant hours ?’
It may be, there is not any where a people who should less be debarred of innocent diversions

versions than the people of England. I will not argue this point, but I will strengthen my observations with one parallel to it from Polybius. This excellent author, who always moralises in his history, and instructs as faithfully as he relates, attributes the ruin of Cynethia, by the Ætolians, in plain terms, to the degeneracy from their Arcadian ancestors, in their neglect of theatrical and musical performances: "The Cynethians (says he) had their situation the farthest north of all Arcadia; they were subjected to an inclement and uncertain air, and, for the most part, cold and melancholic; and, for this reason, they, of all people, should last have parted with the innocent and wholesome remedies which the diversions of music administered to that sourness of temper and fullness of disposition, which of necessity they must partake from the disposition and influence of their climate; for, they no sooner fell to neglect these whole-

some institutions, than they fell into dissensions and civil discords, and grew at length into such depravity of manners, that their crimes, in number and measure, surpassed all nations of the Greeks besides."

Congreve quotes this from Sir Henry Sheers's Polybius, which is, I believe, rather an abridgement than a translation. The whole passage respecting the Cynethians, is well worth consideration; and the reader will find it faithfully given by Mr. Hampton, vol. i. in his quarto edition, pages 358, 59, 60, 61.

Congreve, of all the poets in his time, enjoyed the peculiar happiness of being respected and distinguished by persons the most eminent in the two contending parties, the whigs and tories, in every change of government, from his first appearance as a writer to the time of his death. More than that, he was addressed, courted, and honoured, by all the authors of his time, a tribe of men who are not very remarkable

able for their love of superior merit in their rivals.—The differences of Parnassus were submitted to his decision; and the decrees of Congreve, the poetical chancellor, were subject to no reverse. Even Dennis, the four and intractable Dennis, paid his homage to this writer, who honoured him with his correspondence, and wrote to him several letters, which Dennis afterwards published, and, amongst the rest, an excellent one upon humour. Congreve doubtless gave this Cerberus a sop, as the best means to soften his rugged temper. When asked why he listened to the praises of Dennis, he said, he had much rather be flattered than abused. Swift had a particular friendship for our author, and generously took him under his protection in his high authoritative manner; he claimed the patronage of Lord Oxford for a man preferred by whig-ministers, and who still retained whig-principles.—Dr. Johnson says, that

Congreve discovered more literature than the poets have commonly attained. I have already mentioned his acquaintance with the Greek dramatic writers, a study which seems to have been neglected by most of our former play-authors. Mr. Colman, Mr. Murphy, and Mr. Cumberland, are conversant with the antient writers of Greece and Rome; and it is to be hoped, that the translations of *Æschylus*, *Sophocles*, and *Euripides*, by Dr. Potter, Dr. Franklin, and Mr. Woodhull, and the remarks of Mr. Jodderell upon the *Bacchæ* and *Ion* of *Euripides*, in which he has displayed exquisite taste and most extensive learning, will excite the curiosity and industry of our present and future dramatists, more especially our tragedians, to become acquainted with the great originals of Athens.

To have done with Congreve:—the charms of his conversation must have been very powerful, since nothing could console *Henrietta Duchess of Marlborough*, for the

the loss of his company, so much as an automaton, or small statue of ivory, made exactly to resemble him, which every day was brought to table. A glass was put in the hand of the statue, which was supposed to bow to her Grace, and to nod in approbation of what she spoke to it.—Let us farther add from Steele, what confers infinite honour on the conversation of Congreve; that although the most complete master of wit, and the most poignant satire, no man, after an evening spent in gaiety, ever departed from his company with regret, or could call to mind a single expression that hurt his mind.

Betterton.

CHAPTER XLVI.

Some mistakes relating to Betterton in the Biographia Britannica. — His age. — Old Downes's Roscius Anglicanus. — Betterton's marriage. — No stage-misses till after the Revolution. — Superior merit of the King's actors. — Spectacle and music. — Wintersel, &c. — Dryden and Lee. — Hart's salary. — Causes of the declension of the king's comedians. — Agreement between Hart, &c. and Betterton, &c. — Hart's death. — Mohun and Nell Gwin. — Union of the companies. — Betterton's loss by a venture. — Mrs. Barry, Mrs. Bracegirdle, Mrs. Mountford, and Mrs. Bowman. — Betterton's salary. — Christopher Rich. — Cibber and John Rich. The family of John Rich offended. — King William, Betterton, and Mrs. Barry. — Powell. — Mrs. Mountford. — Betterton's

ton's last benefit and death. — Character of Mrs. Betterton. — Her insanity. — Time of her death uncertain. — Cibber's portrait of Betterton. — Commended for his humanity. — Friendship of Pope and Betterton. — The latter's picture by Pope. — Chaucer's characters. — Epitaph recommended by Pope. — Congreve fellow-manager with Betterton. — Booth. — Wilks. — Dramatic pieces of Betterton. — Mrs. Booth's piety. — Betterton and Garrick.

AS, in the course of these Miscellanies, I have neglected no opportunity to do justice to the merits of that accomplished actor and respectable man, Mr. Thomas Betterton, I shall have less occasion to enlarge here upon the subject. The compilers of the *Biographia Britannica*, a work which confers honour upon themselves and the nation, have very assiduously laboured to clear up the obscurities in which the life of this eminent man is involved.

volved. In a matter of great difficulty, and where so little authentic information can be obtained, it is not surprising that a few mistakes should escape the most inquisitive diligence. I shall endeavour to rectify some errors in that work, and to throw light on certain facts, which have, through length of time, been somewhat darkened.

I do not find, that, in the article of Betterton, the writers of this valuable work have made any use of Downes's *Roscius Anglicanus*; and, though it must be confessed that Downes is very confused and inaccurate, yet, as he is almost the only writer on the stage for a long period, some valuable matter may, with curious searching, be picked out of his pamphlet. His authority, relating to the age of Betterton, must give place to the more authentic testimony of Southern, adduced in the *Biographia*, who, it seems, had his intelligence from the mouth of the great actor himself. By this account, he was
born

born in 1635, though Downes places his birth three years later; and this seems a little surprising, as the *Roscius Anglicanus* was published in the life-time of Betterton, who must have conversed with the author almost continually from 1662 to 1706, the date of his Narrative.

The marriage of Betterton with Mrs. Saunderson is fixed, in the *Biographia Britannica* and *Biographia Dramatica*, to the year 1670. But the exact time is very uncertain: it appears from Downes, that *The Villain*, a tragedy, and Shakspeare's *Henry the Eighth*, were revived, at the Duke's theatre, before the plague of London, in 1665; and the name of Mrs. Betterton is placed to Belmont in *The Villain*, and to *Q. Katharine* in *Henry the Eighth*; consequently the marriage must have taken place five years sooner than the time settled by these writers. It must be observed, that, though Mrs. Saunderson was very young when married to Betterton, she retained

tained the appellation of mistress; made-moifelle, or miss*, though introduced amongst people of fashion, in England, about the latter end of Charles II.'s reign, was not familiar to the middle class of people till a much later time, nor in use amongst the players till toward the latter end of King William's reign. Miss Cross was the first of the stage-misses: she is particularly noticed in Joe Haines's epilogue to Farquhar's *Love and a Bottle*.

It is generally allowed, that the superior success of the King's theatre obliged the Duke of York's company to have recourse to spectacle and music; and this, says Cibber, introduced that species of representation called dramatic operas. I have heard, from the best information of some very old persons,

* Miss was formerly understood to mean a woman of pleasure: so Dryden, in his epilogue to *The Pilgrim*, written in 1700:

Misses there were, but modestly conceal'd:

persons, who lived in the reign of Charles II. that Betterton, as a general actor, was superior to any one comedian of his time. But Hart and Mohun, the great actors of the King's house, had Kynaston, Winterfel, and several other original players in tragedy, to second them; nor were the comic actors of the King's house much inferior to those of the Duke's.

Dryden and Lee, the two court-poets, wrote for the King's theatre, while that was in a flourishing state. Hart's salary, we are told in the Biogr. Brit. was 3*l.* per week. This must be understood to be independent of the profits arising from his share in the house, clothes, and scenes; for the principal performers of that theatre were sharers; and Downes says, that, at the end of a playing-season, they sometimes divided amongst them 1000*l.* each.

The declension of the King's theatre must not solely be ascribed to the growing taste for operas, music, and dancing. About
the

the year 1680, they had lost, by death or retirement from the stage, several actors of great merit; Burt, Winterfel, Cartwright, Lacy, and others; besides, the declining age of the great masters in their profession, Hart and Mohun, rendered them less capable of action than in the prime and vigour of life; the young actors, too, such as Goodman and Clarke, were become impatient to get possession of the principal characters. More than all this, I suspect a rupture to have taken place between Hart and Mohun; for, in the agreement, signed Oct. 14, 1681, between Dr. Davenant, Tho. Betterton, Gent. and Wm. Smith, Gent. on the one part, — and Charles Hart and Edward Kynaston on the other, — the intent of which was to effect an union of the two companies, — no notice whatever is taken of Mohun, who acted after Hart's death, in 1682, at the King's theatre, in the first play written by Southern, called the Persian Prince. Nell Gwin

Gwin in the same play represented a principal character.

The time when the companies were united, the author of Betterton's article, in the Biogr. Brit. rightly says, was uncertain. He suspects that the union was not effected till 1686; but, by looking on the date of Dryden and Lee's *Duke of Guise*, the first edition, which was printed in 1683, by the title-page and the *dramatis personæ*, I find, that Betterton and company were then in possession of the King's theatre.

Betterton was esteemed a very able negotiator, and was certainly very instrumental in bringing about the union of the companies. His conduct, on this occasion, did not escape censure; I suppose chiefly from Mohun and those who opposed the junction, and persisted to act in opposition to Betterton at the King's theatre, though they had lost Hart and Kynaston; but all unprejudiced persons will clear Betterton from any reprehension, for endeavouring to bring
about

about what was become absolutely necessary. K. Charles himself, it is said, approved and recommended the treaty for an union.

The misfortune which Betterton sustained, by losing the greatest part of his fortune in a venture to the East-Indies, is very exactly related in the *Biographia Britannica*. His behaviour, on this memorable occasion, reflects honour on the magnanimity of his mind: his taking into his house, and educating at his own expence, the daughter of his ruined friend who had engaged him in the unhappy adventure, places him in a rank with Satyrus, the Greek comedian, whose generosity to the captive daughters of his dead host I have related in my observations on the second act of *Hamlet*. The daughter of Betterton's unhappy friend was married to Mr. Bowman, whom I have often had occasion to mention; she was admired as a very fine woman and a pleasing actress. The stage, perhaps, never produced four such handsome

some women, at once, as * Mrs. Barry, Mrs. Bracegirdle, Mrs. Mountford, and Mrs. Bowman : when they appeared together, in the last scene of the Old Batchelor, the audience were struck with so fine a groupe of beauty, and broke out into loud applauses.

It is to be lamented, that Betterton, when acting-manager, and constantly labouring to please the public in a variety of characters, should have so little real influence and so small a portion of the profits ; this great actor's salary never rising to more than 4l. per week. Christopher Rich, father to the late John Rich, Esq. of Covent-garden, possessed the greatest share of the patent ; and, if we may believe Colley Cibber, he employed all his arts to

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* The illiberal historian of the two stages says,— Mrs. Barry was the finest woman *on* the stage, and the reverse when off.

distress the actors, though not really to benefit himself. In short, Cibber makes him out a man who had neither conscience nor ability: he draws so hateful a character of obstinacy, low cunning, tyranny, and perverseness, that humanity would induce us to suppose the writer had drawn a caricature rather than a real portrait. Yet Cibber and the son of this man, I well remember, always appeared to live on very friendly terms, even after the publication of the Apology. It was my ill fortune, it seems, to displease the family of John Rich, by attributing to him, in my Memoirs of Mr. Garrick, some whimsical peculiarities, which, at the same time, I said were owing to the neglect of his education. My ascribing to him several amiable qualities, besides commending his professional abilities at large, did not, it seems, appease their anger; but they should consider, I was not writing the Lives of the Saints.

To

To return to Betterton. Rich and his partners, carried their oppression of the players to such a height, that an application to the throne, for redress, became absolutely necessary. The nobility, and all persons of eminence, favoured the cause of the comedians; the generous Dorset introduced Betterton, Mrs. Barry, Mrs. Bracegirdle, and others, to the king, who granted them an audience. William, though deficient in that charm of affability and condescension with which Charles, his uncle, captivated all who approached him, was yet ready to extend his favour to the players. He was not displeased to see in his presence two such wonders in the theatrical world as Betterton and Mrs. Barry, whose keen expressive looks commanded attention and respect. William, who had freed all the subjects of England from slavery, except the inhabitants of the mimical world, rescued them also from the insolence and tyranny of their oppressors.

In a note, in the *Biog. Brit.* relating to Powell, who was vain enough to think himself a rival to Betterton, this player is treated with too much contempt. Cibber, though an enemy, does not rate him so low as this writer, but attributes his not rising to a greater degree of perfection in his profession, to too much confidence in his abilities, to idleness, and to intemperance. Though Addison, in the *Spectator*, animadverts upon Powell's tragic extravagancies in some situations of character, upon the whole, he highly commends him; nor would the difficult part of Orestes, in the *Distressed Mother*, have been put into his hands, by Wilks, Dogget, and Cibber, if Addison and the author had not chosen him for the part.

Another note, in the same *Biographia*, mentions Mrs. Mountford and Mrs. Verbruggen as belonging to Rich's company of comedians. The writer did not know, or at least had forgotten, that Mrs. Mountford

was,

was, by her second marriage, become Mrs. Verbruggen. This admirable comic actress died in childbed, 1703.

After Betterton had, for several years, acted as chief manager, under King William's patent, at the theatre in the Tennis-court, Lincoln's-inn-fields, with various success, he found that age and diseases, accompanied with frequent fits of the gout, advanced so fast upon him, that he was obliged to resign the management of the theatre, and to act only particular parts as often as his health would permit. By his two last benefits he is thought to have gained near 1000*l*. and yet his circumstances, at his death, were reproachful to an age of which he was so great an ornament. He died April 28, 1710, and was buried in Westminster-abbey. Steele's reflections, in his Tatler of May the 2d, on Betterton's funeral, are written with the tender feelings of a friend, and in a style dignified with sentiment and pathos.

Mrs. Betterton was the faithful companion and fellow-labourer of this great comedian for above five-and-forty years. She excelled in comedy and tragedy; and was, according to Cibber, so superior in representing some of Shakspeare's characters, especially Lady Macbeth, that even Mrs. Barry could not approach her in some particular touches of the madness incidental to that part. Her understanding was solid, and her address gentle and polite; while her husband instructed the noble male-performers in Crown's Calisto, acted at court in 1675, Mrs. Betterton gave lessons to the Princesses Mary and Anne, daughters of James Duke of York, and Mrs. Sarah Jennings, afterwards the famous Duchess of Marlborough. She likewise taught the Princess Anne the part of Semandra, in the tragedy of Mithridates, which was also acted at court. Betterton was naturally of a cheerful disposition, and had a very high confidence in providence.

dence. The wife was of a thoughtful and melancholy temper; she was so strongly affected with his death, that she ran distracted, though she appeared rather a prudent and constant, than a fond and passionate wife. They had no children: William Betterton, said to be his son by some mistaken writers, who was drowned in bathing, at Wallingford, in 1662, was a man very near as old as himself, as will appear on consulting Downes; nor is it known that he was at all related to our Betterton.

A lady, intimately acquainted with Mrs. Betterton, amongst other particulars which she communicated to the compilers of the *Biographia Britannica*, informed them, that some time before her death, she recovered her senses. Pity it is, that the same lady did not inform them of the exact time when she died. The *Biographia Dramatica* asserts positively, that she left the world six months after the death of

her husband; in the *Biographia Britannica*, it is more cautiously said, that, *according to the best information*, she died within that time. But, that she was alive about thirteen months after, viz. June 4, 1711, I shall prove, from the following playhouse-advertisement, taken from the original edition of the *Spectator*:

At the particular desire of several ladies of quality.

For the benefit of the widow of the late famous tragedian, Mr. Betterton,

At the theatre-royal in Drury-lane, this present Monday, the 4th of June,

Will be presented a comedy, called the **MAN OF MODE**, or **Sir Foplin Flutter**.

Betterton's character, as an actor, is drawn by Cibber in so masterly a style, that nothing equal to it, on the subject of acting, is to be found, I believe, in any
lan-

language. Though to attempt any addition to Cibber's complete enumeration of Betterton's talents, would be impertinent, and, at this distance of time, ridiculous, — to pick up a few particulars, relating to this extraordinary man, from books and oral tradition, may not be all together unentertaining.

Betterton was not only celebrated for his polite behaviour to the dramatic writers of his time, but also for his great modesty, in not presuming to understand any characters which they offered to him till he had their repeated instructions. Besides this, I find him commended, in some verses published in the State Poems, for his humanity, in opening his purse to such writers whose wants stood in need of his assistance, and till the success of their piece on a third night enabled them to repay their kind lender. I remember that he is, in one poem, called the poets' banker. Unlike Colley Cibber, he treated
authors

authors with good nature and good manners, never assuming haughty and insolent behaviour. By his and Mrs. Barry's superior exertions, many an indifferent play passed on the public, in acting, for a work of merit, the wonderful skill of the actor supplying all deficiencies. The dramatic writers of those times appear to have been fully convinced of his inclination and abilities to forward their works on the stage. Some of them have left testimonies of their deference to his judgment and regard for his friendship; particularly Dryden in the beginning of his preface to *Don Sebastian*, and Rowe in the latter part of *Shakspere's Life*.

Nothing can give us a higher idea of the sweetness of his temper, and of his great affability, than the effect his behaviour produced on Pope, who, when first brought into his company, must have been very young, and in all probability, a mere boy. So charmed was Pope with the good old man, and he with Pope, that, at his request,

request, Betterton sat to him for his picture, which he drew in oil. I have been lately informed, that Pope only copied Betterton's picture from an original of Sir Godfrey Kneller. This curiosity is still to be seen at Caen-wood, in the possession of Lord Mansfield. So eager was Pope to enlarge Betterton's fame, that he published, in his Miscellany, the prologues of Chaucer modernized, in his name; but the true modernizer, we have reason to believe, was Pope himself: Fenton, we are told by Dr. Johnson, offered him five pounds if he would produce those poems in Betterton's hand-writing.

From Pope's literary correspondence with Mr. Cromwell, it appears, he had informed him that he intended to take care of Betterton's remains, meaning, I suppose, this good-natured posthumous forgery. Pope, in a P. S. to one of his letters, writes thus: This letter of Death's puts me in mind of poor Betterton's! over whom I would have this sentence of Tully for an epitaph,

epitaph, which will serve for his moral as well as his theatrical capacity :

* *Vitæ bene actæ jucundissima est recordatio.*

That Betterton was much respected and esteemed, by persons of the highest rank and greatest eminence, cannot be questioned. By his interest with Lord Dorset and other noblemen, a patent was granted for the building a new theatre. Congreve condescended to accept a share in this playhouse, and to be a joint manager with Betterton ; but Congreve afterwards spurned the low degrees by which he rose to distinction, and, in his answer to Collier, pretty plainly condemns those who occasioned his playhouse connection.

It is said, that this author wrote an occasional prologue, which was spoken by Mrs. Bracegirdle, as Mr. Rowe did an epilogue, spoken by Mrs. Barry, on the benefit-

* Sweet is the remembrance of a life well acted,

fit-night of Betterton, April, 1709: but, although the epilogue remains a lasting testimony of the author's sincere regard for his old friend, the prologue was withdrawn, and never appeared in print.*

Smith, an actor whom Booth terms almost equal to Betterton, lived in the utmost harmony with him till the death of the former in 1695. They had long been associates in the management of the theatre, nor was it known that they ever fell into the least variance. Booth spoke of Betterton always with respect and veneration. While living he paid him filial duty, and the other proved a second father to him, by his kind admonitions and friendly instructions. It was his constant practice to encourage young players that manifested any degree of merit with becoming modesty. Wilks played Lysippus, in the Maid's

* Life of Congreve, part 2, p. 11.

Maid's Tragedy, for his first part in London : when he spoke to Betterton, who acted Melantius, he was so struck with awe and surprise, that he could scarcely utter a line. Betterton, instead of discouraging him, revived his spirits, by telling him, that apprehensive fear of an audience, in a young actor, was no ill sign of intrinsic merit. When the mean parsimony of Christopher Rich, and his partners, obliged Wilks to think seriously of returning to Dublin, Betterton laboured to convince them, though in vain, of their imprudence in parting with a young man of such abilities.

Of Betterton as an author, who wrote some plays and altered others, more cannot with truth be said, than that, by his perfect knowledge of the stage, he conducted the plot and disposed the scenes in such a manner as to produce dramatic effect. Downes assures us, that most, if not all, of his pieces, were much applauded and followed ;

followed ; but, notwithstanding they were well approved by the public, he seems to have thought very modestly of them, for he never would consent to publish one of them. His Amorous Widow, or Wanton Wife, was long the favourite of the town. Part of this play, I mean the plot of the Wanton Wife, which is taken from Moliere's George Dandin, is now often acted as a farce, in which Mr. Quick and Mrs. Mattocks play the principal parts to great advantage.

The piety of Mrs. Booth raised a monument to the memory of her husband in Westminster-abbey ; but, though it is said that Wilks, Dogget, and Cibber, and Booth, Wilks, and Cibber, successively patentees of Drury-lane theatre, talked of paying due respect in marble to their old master in the same cathedral, they did not put their intention into practice. Mr. Garrick, who, on all occasions, was ready to promote any public or generous design, could

could not have erected a more lasting monument to his own fame than by perpetuating the memory of a man who was so eminent an ornament of the English stage; a man, who, for universality of genius, was the only actor who could be compared to himself. For, if Garrick played Lear and Abel Drugger, the other acted Othello and Sir Toby Belch; the former's Hamlet and Scrub are not parts more distinct or distant from each other than Betterton's Hotspur and Falstaff; the latter's Alexander the Great and Sir Solomon Single may be fairly contrasted with Garrick's Richard the Third and the School-boy. They were both accomplished masters of their profession; and scarcely any part, in the whole personæ dramatis, could be too difficult for their consummate abilities.

In Garrick's museum, you might have seen multiplied paintings and engravings of himself, in various characters; but no pic-

picture or print, that I can call to mind, of any other actor.* In this, the Monthly Reviewer says, and I suppose it may be true, that I am mistaken: he informs me that Mr. Garrick had an original picture of Betterton, and of this he was very fond.

* Though I have proyed, from the title and dramatic personæ of the Duke of Guise, that Betterton, Kynaston, &c. were in possession of Drury-lane theatre in 1683, I find, by the title and characters of Banks's Unhappy Favourite, that this play was acted at the same theatre, in 1685, by some of the old company; by Clarke, Griffin, Major Mohun, Mrs. Gwin, and others.

Neither the author's prologue, nor Dryden's prologue and epilogue, give any light into this obscure matter.

Colley Cibber.

CHAPTER XLVII.

Reformation of the stage owing to a player.—Gibber's Love's last Shift.—Richard Norton, Esq.—Dennis.—Careless Husband and Provoked Husband.—Last act of Love's last Shift.—Cibber a reproach to other comic writers.—The people not so licentious as the dramatic poets.—Cibber's mean income.—Sir Novelty Fashion a good picture of fops.—His remarkable dress.—Actress of Narcissa.—Hillaria and Amanda.—Amanda.—Sir William Wiserwould.—B. Jonson, the actor.—Mr. Horden, an accomplished player, killed.—Rose-tavern.—George Powell.—Nantz-brandv.—Cibber and Verbruggen.—Richard Cross's Account of Master Colley.—Mr. Alexander. Cibber a servant in Sir Antony Love.—Verbruggen and the Duke of St. A.—An odd apology.—Chesterfield and Cibber.—

The

*The latter's character by a certain writer. Verbruggen's Oroonoko.—Tom Elrington. Barry and Garrick.—More relating to Verbruggen.—Vanbrugh's Relapse.—His comic muse.—Lord Foppington, Cibber's chief excellence.—Cibber's Æsop.—Mr. Henderson.—Prolific muse of Vanbrugh.—Swift and Pope.—Cibber's Sir John Brute. Quin and Garrick.—Comparison between Cibber and Garrick.—A cap for the ladies, by Mr. Garrick.—Cibber's Xerxes.—Bet-
 terton and Mrs. Barry.—Careless Husband;—character of the play.—Cibber and Mrs. Porter.—Mrs. Oldfield;—described at length.—Her great abilities.---
 Mr. Manwaring and General Churchill. Prince and Princess of Wales.---Mr. Pope. Narcissa.---Mrs. Saunders.---Tragedy and Mrs. Oldfield.---Sophonisba.---Mrs. Oldfield's confounding a hissing spectator.---
 Her Lady Townly.---Mrs. Heron and Mrs. Woffington.---Wilks in Lord Townly.---
 Mr. Garrick.---Barry.---Cibber's two unlucky passions.---His acting tragedy.---*

Iago.---*Mr. Macklin's Iago, and Barry's Othello*.---*Cibber exploded in Scipio*.---*Cibber a manager*.---*Choking singing-birds; Cibber's method of it*.---*An Anecdote*.---*Colonel Brett*.---*Cibber accused of pilfering from plays in his possession*.---*His method of treating authors*.---*Wilks and Booth*.---*Dogget*;---*his character*.---*Dicky Norris and Bullock*.---*Mrs. Porter*.---*Cibber's love of gaming*.---*Sir, Courtly Nice*.---*Wilks a reformer*.---*Powell*.---*Original spectator*.---*Addison and Steele*.---*Powell and a bailiff*.---*Cibber mistaken*.---*Booth beloved*.---*Harper and Shepherd*.---*The Settle*.---*Power of envy*.---*Garrick and Cibber*.---*Cibber's repartee to Garrick*.---*Elrington*.---*Cibber's character concluded*.

TO a player we are indebted for the reformation of the stage. The first comedy, acted since the Restoration, in which were preserved purity of manners and decency of language, with a due respect to the honour of the marriage-bed, was Colley Cibber's *Love's last Shift*, or

The

The Fool in Fashion. The principal plot of this play was not unknown to the English theatre: Amanda's scheme to allure her profligate husband to her arms, by personating another woman, resembles the contrivance of Helen in All's Well that Ends Well, and still more, I believe, the wife's scheme in Shirley's Gamester. The success of this piece exceeded greatly the author's expectation; but so little was hoped from the genius of Cibber, that the critics reproached him with stealing his play. To his censurers he makes a serious defence of himself, in his dedication to Richard Norton, Esq. of Southwick, a gentleman who was so fond of stage-plays and players, that he has been accused of turning his chapel into a theatre.

The furious John Dennis, who hated Cibber, for obstructing, as he imagined, the progress of his tragedy, called the Invader of his Country, in very passionate terms denies his claim to this comedy:

'When the Fool in Fashion was first

F f 3

acted

acted (says the critic) Cibber was hardly twenty years of age—how could he, at the age of twenty, write a comedy with a just design, distinguished characters, and a proper dialogue, who now, at forty, treats us with Hibernian sense and Hibernian English?

Poor Cibber! it was his hard fate to have his best comedies attributed to any body but himself. His *Careless Husband* was, for a long time, given to the Duke of Argyle and other noblemen. Nothing could put an end to such ungenerous and weak suggestions, but his scenes of high life in the *Provoked Husband*, which he proved to be his own by printing the unfinished MS. of Sir John Vanbrugh's play, called a *Journey to London*. Some comic characters of this writer were severely treated by the audience, because supposed to be written by Cibber.

In *Love's last Shift*, the audience were particularly charmed with the great scene,

And saw which in Fashion was the best

in the last act, where the ill-treated and abandoned wife reveals herself to her surprised and admiring husband. The joy of unexpected reconciliation, from Loveless's remorse and penitence, spread such an uncommon rapture of pleasure in the audience, that never were spectators more happy in easing their minds by uncommon and repeated plaudits. The honest tears, shed by the audience at this interview, conveyed a strong reproach to our licentious poets, and was to Cibber the highest mark of honour. The uncommon run of this comedy, which I have been told formerly, by several who lived at that time, was greatly admired and followed, is a convincing proof that the people at large are never so vicious as to abandon the cause of decency and virtue; and that it was entirely owing to our dramatic writers themselves, that plays were not lessons of morality as well as amusements of pleasure. While Congreve's plays were acted with

applause at Lincoln's-inn-fields theatre, Cibber's *Love's last Shift*, Manbrugh's *Relapse*, and Southern's *Oroonoko*, were successfully opposed to them at Drury-lane. But while Cibber, by his new comedy, and his peculiar merit in reading foppish and other parts, drew crowds after him, the parsimonious and ungrateful patentees allotted him no larger income than thirty or forty shillings per week.

Sir Noveltty Fashion was a true picture of manners in the top of the times. Before this author wrote, our affected gentlemen of the stage were, I believe, not quite so entertaining with their extravagances, nor so learned in their profession of foppery. *Etheridge's Sir Popling Flutter* is rather a copy of *Moliere's Marquis* than a thing of English growth. *Crown's Sir Courtly Niece* is, in a few shadows, distinct from the other, by being more insignificantly soft and more pompously important. *Sir Courtly's* song, of "stop thief!" is a

trans-

translation from a sonnet of the French poet. The presenting the reader with Sir Novelty's dress will revive the idea of the long forgotten beau of King William's time. In the genuine language of a fop, who expects his mistress should admire him for his outside decoration rather than the accomplishments of his mind, Sir Novelty tells Narcissa, that his fine fashioned suit raises a great number of ribbon-weavers &c. In short, Madam, the cravat-string, the garter, the sword-knot, the cincturine, the bandash, the steinkirk, the large button, the plume, and the full peruke, were all created, cried down, and revived, by me. Such a dress of ancient foppery, exhibited at a masquerade, would draw as many admirers as any habit of modern invention.

In his *Narcissa*, acted by Mrs. Mountford, Cibber drew an outline of a coquette in high life, of which character he afterwards made a finished picture, in his *Lady*

Betty

Betty Modish. Besides the honour of reforming the moral of comedy, Cibber was the first who introduced men and women of high quality on the stage, and gave them language and manners suitable to their rank and birth.

Mrs. Cibber, the wife of Colley, whose name is seldom to be found in any of the personæ dramatis, was his *Hillaria*. So much depended on Amanda, and especially in the two last acts, that the success of the play must, in some measure, be owing to the actress, Mrs. Rogers, who continued a favourite of the public till her merit was eclipsed by the superior splendor of an Oldfield. Sir William Wisewould, the old gentleman, who pretends to great command over his passion, and is constantly subdued by them, is, I think, a new character; and I believe, the first of consequence, which gave old Ben Jonson an opportunity to discover his great comic powers: he had been just brought to London

don from an itinerant company. The audience saw his merit, and cherished it through life, from 1695 to 1742.

Mr. Horden, the son of a clergyman, a very promising young actor, and remarkable for his fine person, was the Young Worthy. The gentleman was bred a scholar: he complimented George Powell, in a Latin encomium on his Treacherous Brothers. He was soon after killed, in an accidental fray, at the bar of the Rose-tavern, which was at that time remarkable for entertaining all sorts of company, and subject, of consequence, to riot and disorder. In this house George Powell spent great part of his time; and often toasted, to intoxication, his mistress, with bumpers of Nantz-brand; he came sometimes so warm, with that noble spirit, to the theatre, and courted the ladies so furiously on the stage, that, in the opinion of Sir John Vanbrugh, they were almost in danger of being conquered on the spot.

Powell

Powell was a principal player of Drury-lane when Love's last Shift was first acted: some quarrel or difference between him and Cibber, we may reasonably suppose, prevented his having a part in the play, considering there were two, at least, well suited to his abilities, Lovells and Young Worthing. Verbruggen he chose to represent the former. As the Miscellanies are drawing to a conclusion, I shall not have to fit an opportunity of doing justice to the merits of an actor of whom Cibber speaks so sparingly and coldly.

Cibber and Verbruggen were two dissipated young fellows, who determined, in opposition to the advice of friends, to become great actors. Much about the same time, they were constant attendants upon Downes, the prompter of Drury-lane, in expectation of employment. What the first part was, in which Verbruggen distinguished himself, cannot now be known. But Mr. Richard Cross, late prompter of Drury-lane

lane theatre, gave me the following history of Colley Cibber's first establishment as a hired actor. He was known only, for some years, by the name of Master Colley. After waiting impatiently a long time for the prompter's notice, by good fortune he obtained the honour of carrying a message on the stage, in some play, to Betterton. Whatever was the cause, Master Colley was so terrified, that the scene was disconcerted by him. Betterton asked, in some anger, who the young fellow was that had committed the blunder. Downes replied, 'Master Colley.' — 'Master Colley,' then forfeit him.' — 'Why, Sir,' said the prompter, 'he has no salary.' — 'No,' said the old man, 'why then put him down ten shillings a week, and forfeit him.' — To this good-natured adjustment of reward and punishment, Cibber owed the first money he received in the treasurer's office.

Verbrug-

Verbruggen was so passionately fond of Alexander the Great, at that time the hero of the actors, that the players and the public knew him, for some years, by no other name. I have seen the name of Mr. Alexander to several parts in Dryden's plays; to Ptolemy in Cleomenes King of Sparta, to Aurelius in K. Arthur, and Ramirez in Love Triumphant, or Nature will Prevail. Verbruggen, I believe, did not assume his own name, in the playhouse-bills, till the secession of Betterton and others, from Drury-lane, in 1695. The author of the Laureat says, that the name of Colley was inserted in the characters of several plays. For this I have searched in vain; the earliest proof of Cibber's appearing in any part is amongst the dramatis personæ of Southern's Sir Antony Love, acted for the first time in 1691, in which his name is placed to a Servant. That Verbruggen and Cibber did not accord, is plainly insinuated by the

the author of the *Laureat*. * It was known that the former would resent an injury, and that the latter's valour was entirely passive. The temper of Verbruggen may be known from a story, which I have been often told by the old comedians as a certain fact, and which found its way into some temporary publication.

Verbruggen, in a dispute with one of King Charles's illegitimate sons, was so far transported, by sudden anger, as to strike him and call him a son of a whore.—The affront was given, it seems, behind the scenes of Drury-lane. Complaint was made of this daring insult on a nobleman; and Verbruggen was told, he must either not act in London, or submit publicly to ask the nobleman's pardon. During the time of his being interdicted acting, he had engaged himself to Betterton's theatre.

He

* P. 59.

He consented to ask pardon, on liberty granted to express his submission in his own terms. He came on the stage dressed for the part of Oroonoko; and, after the usual preface, owned that he had called the Duke of St. A. a son of a whore: 'It is true, and I am sorry for it.' On saying this, he invited the company present to see him act the part of Oroonoko at the theatre in Lincoln's-inn-fields.

To Cibber's passive valour Lord Chesterfield ironically alludes in a weekly paper called *Common-Sense*: 'Of all the comedians who have appeared on the stage in my memory, no one has taken a kicking with such humour as our excellent Laureat.' He is thus characterized in the *History of the Two Stages*: 'He is always repining at the success of others; and, upon the stage, is always making his fellow-actors uneasy.' Whatever gloss Cibber might put on his conduct, and however, in his *Apology*, he may extol the equanimity of his own temper,

temper, there is too much reason to believe part of this charge to be true. Cibber, however, chose Verbruggen for his Loveless, and certainly from a confidence in his superior abilities, in preference to any other actor.

In 1696, Verbruggen was called upon to an exertion of his talents in tragedy. The part of Oroonoko was assigned him by Southern, by the special advice of William Cavendish, the first Duke of Devonshire. This we are told in the dedication to his Grace; he adds, that it was Verbruggen's endeavour, in the performance of that part, to merit the Duke's recommendation. A more exalted character, dignified with the noblest faculties of the mind, is not to be found in the English theatre. The passion of love is no where so tenderly or ardently expressed. Cibber meanly drops any mention of the man who first acted this great original part. From Verbruggen's Oroonoko, Tom El-

Elrington, an excellent general player, caught a most noble flame of imitation.—In the surprise of Oroonoko, on his unexpectedly meeting with Imoinda, a situation which calls for an actor of the greatest genius, Elrington charmed all who saw his action and heard his expression. I have heard Mr. Macklin speak of Elrington's excellence, in this scene, with rapture.—Barry himself was not always equally happy in this superior lover. Garrick seldom failed; but he was not equally successful in Oroonoko; the lustre of his eye was lost in the shade of the black colour; nor was his voice so finely adapted to the melting and passionate addresses and feelings of the lover as to the more violent emotions of the heart. A farther confirmation of Cibber's unfair representation of Verbruggen's merit, was the constant respect paid to him by such capable judges of merit as Congreve and Rowe, who trusted him with some of their most difficult characters. He was the

the original Bajazet; and the author of the Laureat thinks that the part has not been equally acted since. It is said, he once boasted that he frightened a bailiff from pursuit of him, by *putting on his Bajazet's look of terror*. Elrington was, in Bajazet, as well as in other tragic characters, a fine copy of Verbruggen. When the managers of Drury-lane gave Bajazet to Elrington, in preference to John Mills, who had often played that part, the latter complained to Booth of the disgrace: Booth told him, Elrington would make nine such actors as Mills. When Verbruggen died we have no certain account; nor can I find his name to any part in a new play later than that of Sullen in the Stratagem, acted originally in 1707. To sum up his character in the words of a late author: "He was, in many parts, an excellent actor. In Cassius, Oroonoko, Ventidius, Chamont, Pierre, Cethegus, (in tragedy) as well as several in comedy, as the Rover, &c. he was an original;

and had a roughness, and a negligent agreeable wildness, in his manner, action, and mein, which became him well.*

Cibber's next step to fame was his being honoured by Sir John Vanbrugh, with a continuation of his *Love's last Shift*, in the *Relapse*, or *Virtue in Danger*. Of all language in comedy, that of this author is the most natural, and the most easy to learn by rote. The *Thalia* of Vanbrugh resembles a female who charms by the native beauty of her person, the sprightliness of her air, and simplicity of her dress; though, at the same time, she exerts her influence to steal into your heart and corrupt it. The style of this writer is more the language of conversation than his friend Congreve's. Dine when you will with the latter, you are sure to feast: to have the choicest fish, pheasant, partridge, venison, turtle, &c. With the other you have delicious

* *Laureat*, p. 58.

licious fare, it is true, but blended with the plainest dishes: the surloin is not banished to the side-board, nor will you be at a loss to find a joint of mutton.

The coxcomb-knight, Sir Novelty, in the Fool in Fashion, is, in the Relapse, dignified with a title. Lord Foppington is exalted into a higher degree of folly than the knight; the author has placed him in more whimsical situations to excite mirth. Cibber's Foppington I have often seen: as the fashions of the times altered, he adjusted his action and behaviour to them, and introduced every species of growing foppery.—Cibber excelled in a variety of comic characters; but his perfection of action was the coxcomb of quality, and especially his Lord Foppington, in the Careless Husband, which is a very fine draught of a man of good parts stepping beyond the bounds of sense, by peculiarity of excess in dress and behaviour.

In Vanbrugh's comedy of *Æsop*, Ciber acted the principal character with that easy gravity which becomes the man who instructs by fable.

In pronouncing the fables of *Æsop*, which more resemble the style of Fontaine than Prior's, which are professedly copied from him, my friend, Mr. John Henderson, excels all men. Those who have heard him read a tale of Prior or Swift, a chapter of *Tristram Shandy*, or any composition of the same species, will justify my opinion of his merit, in fully conceiving and uttering the spirit of an author in the most familiar and agreeable manner.

At her first onset, the muse of Vanbrugh was very prolific: in the space of six or seven months she brought forth three comedies; the last was the *Provoked Wife*. There seems to have reigned in our dramatists of that age a strong desire to throw abuse on the clergy: in this play, which

I think

I think is the most perfect of his pieces, he has introduced Sir John Brute drunk in the habit of a clergyman; his Parson Bull, in the Relapse, was another vile representation of the sacred order. Pope was at a loss to guess at Swift's unalterable dislike to Vanbrugh: I think the doubt is easily resolved, from the poet's ridicule of churchmen.

Cibber's Sir John Brute was copied from Betterton, as far as a weak pipe and an inexpressive meagre countenance could bear any resemblance to the vigorous original. I have seen him act this part with great and deserved applause; his skill was so masterly, that, in spite of natural impediments, he exhibited a faithful picture of the worshipful debauchee. Vanbrugh was, I suppose, prevailed upon by Cibber to transfer the abuse on the clergy to a satirical picture of women of fashion, in a scene which Cibber acted with much pleasantry. His comic feeling when drunk, and after

receiving the challenge of Constant, when he found him and Heartfree in his wife's closet, was inimitable acting. The audience were so delighted with him, that they renewed their loudest approbation several times.

Quin, for several years, was the Brute of Lincoln's-inn-fields and other theatres. He was in general a most valuable performer in comedy. In Sir John Brute, he seemed to have forgotten that he had ever been a gentleman, of which part of the character Cibber and Garrick retained the remembrance through every scene of Brute's riot and debauchery. Quin, besides, in this part, wanted variety, and that glow and warmth, in colouring the extravagances of this merry rake, without which the picture remains imperfect and unfinished.

When Garrick was first announced for Brute, various were the opinions of the play-going people. Quin swore that he
might

might possibly act Master Jackey Brute, but that it was impossible he should ever be Sir John Brute. The public almost unanimously set the stamp of approbation on his manner of representing this character, upon his first attempt. After he had fully satisfied his fancy, and ripened his judgment by the experience of two or three years, he was pronounced to be as perfect in this as in any of his most approved parts.

Though Cibber's performance in Brute was justly admired, those who can call to remembrance the different portraits of this riotous debauchee, as exhibited by these two great masters, will, I believe, justify me in giving the preference, on the whole, to Mr. Garrick. The latter had, amongst other advantages, a more expressive countenance, and a much happier tone of voice: his action, too, was more diversified, and his humour less confined. — In the Bacchanalian scene, with Lord Rake and his gang, from deficiency of power
and

and look, Cibber fell greatly short of Garrick; here the latter was most triumphantly riotous, and kept the spectators in continual glee. Cibber's pale face, tame features, and weak pipe, did not present so full a contrast to female delicacy, when in woman's apparel, as Garrick's stronger-marked features, manly voice, and more sturdy action. The cap, which he ordered to be made for this scene, was a satirical stroke upon the vast quantity of gauze, ribbon, blond lace, flowers, fruit, herbage, &c. with which the ladies, about eight years since, used to adorn their heads. After enlarging so much on the great perfection of acting which Cibber displayed in the closet-scene, where Constant and Heartfree are discovered, I cannot there give the preference to Garrick, though of all the actors of drunken-scenes he was allowed to be the most natural and diverting; but impartiality requires me here to give the palm to Cibber.

In

In 1699, Cibber was unhappily seized with a passion for writing tragedy. — This brought forth his *Xerxes*; but the patentees and actors of Drury-lane rejected his tragic brat so absolutely, that he was reduced to the necessity of applying to the company of Lincoln's-inn-fields.

Betterton consented to act this tragedy, on condition the author would pledge his credit to pay all incidental expences, in case of non-success.* The action of Betterton and Mrs. Barry could not prevent the entire damnation of *Xerxes*.

Soon after, the author employed his talents more happily in writing the *Careless Husband*. The success of this comedy raised him, very deservedly, to a high rank amongst our dramatic writers. The plot is simple: the reforming a gay, thoughtless, libertine, into the kind and generous husband,

* Life of *Æsopus*, annexed to the Laureat.

husband, by opening, in its full lustre, the amiable conduct of a patient and neglected wife; to the main plot was added, in an episode, a well-concerted scheme of pretended love, to reduce, by jealousy, a lovely coquette to the frank acknowledgment of a real passion for a worthy and constant lover. The dialogue of the play is easy and natural; properly elevated to the rank of the personæ dramatis. The acts seem to be made up of nothing but chit-chat, though the characters are well discriminated and the plot regularly proceeds. Cibber was fond of scenes of reconciliation: in three or four of his comedies,* he has wrought them up with incidents so natural and interesting, and in a style so truly affecting, that they afford perpetual source of pleasure to an audience. So well did Cibber, though a professed libertine through life,

* Love's last Shift, Careless Husband, Wife's Resentment, Provoked Husband.

life, understand the dignity of virtue, that no comic author has drawn more delightful and striking pictures of it. Mrs. Porter, upon reading a part, in which Cibber had painted virtue in the strongest and most lively colours, asked him how it came to pass, that a man, who could draw such admirable portraits of goodness, should yet live as if he were a stranger to it? 'Madam,' said Colley, 'the one is absolutely necessary, the other is not.'

The first shining proof of Mrs. Oldfield's merit was produced in the Careless Husband; little known before, she was barely suffered. Her Lady Betty Modish at once discovered accomplishments to which the public were strangers.

Mrs. Oldfield was, in person, tall, genteel, and well shaped; her countenance pleasing and expressive, enlivened with large speaking eyes, which, in some particular comic situations, she kept half shut, especially when she intended to give effect
to

to some brilliant or gay thought. In sprightliness of air, and elegance of manner, she excelled all actresses; and was greatly superior in the clear, sonorous, and harmonious tones of her voice.

By being a welcome and constant visitor to families of distinction, Mrs. Oldfield acquired an elegant and graceful deportment in representing women of high rank. She expressed the sentiments of Lady Betty Modish and Lady Townly in a manner so easy, natural, and flowing, and so like to her common conversation, that they appeared to be her own genuine conceptions. She was introduced to Christopher Rich by Sir John Vanbrugh. She lived successively the friend and mistress of Arthur Manwaring, Esq. one of the most accomplished men of his age, and General Churchill.—She had a son by each of these gentlemen.—Notwithstanding these connections were publicly known, she was invited to the houses of women of fashion, as much distinguished

tinguished for unblemished character as elevated rank. The royal family did not disdain to see Mrs. Oldfield at their levees. George II. and Queen Caroline, when Prince and Princess of Wales, often condescended to converse with her. One day, the Princess told Mrs. Oldfield, she had heard that General Churchill and she were married.—‘So it is said, may it please your Highness, but we have not owned it yet.’

Mrs. Oldfield, from mere motives of compassion, bestowed a yearly pension of 50*l.* on the unfortunate Savage, which he enjoyed to her death. Dr. Johnson seems to approve Savage’s not celebrating the memory of his benefactress in a poem. But, surely, he might have written verses on his patroness, without offence to decency or morality. Mrs. Oldfield was generous and humane, witty, well-bred, and universally admired and beloved. In variety of professional merit, she excelled all the actresses of her time. These are topics

Mr.

Mr. Savage might have insisted upon, without wounding his piety.

Pope, who seems to have prosecuted the name of player with a malignancy unworthy of genius, in his *Art of Sinking in Poetry*, stigmatized her conversation by the word *Oldfieldismos*, which he printed in Greek characters. There cannot be a doubt that he meant Mrs. Oldfield by the dying coquette, in his *Epistle on the Characters of Men*:

Odious ! in woollen ! 'twould a faint provoke !—
 Were the last words which poor Narcissa spoke.—
 No ! let a charming chintz and Brussels lace
 Wrap my cold limbs and shade my lifeless face.
 One would not, sure, be frightful when one's dead !
 And, Betty, give this cheek a little red.

The Betty here mentioned is supposed to have been Mrs. Saunders, Mrs. Oldfield's friend and confidante, a very good actress in parts of decayed widows, nurses, and old maids. She retired from the stage in 1725 ; and played, about nine years after,
 the

the part of Lady Wishfor't, in the Way of the World, for the benefit of Mrs. Younger, soon after, by marriage, the honourable Mrs. Finch. Mrs. Oldfield had, for a long time, conceived a dislike to acting parts in tragedy; but the constant applause which followed her tragic representation, reconciled her at last to Melpomene. Her last new part in tragedy, was Thomson's Sophonisba. The author bestows, in his short advertisement to the play, a very high encomium on her action and deportment in that noble character.-- In reply to some degrading expression of Massinissa, relating to Carthage, she uttered the following line,

Not one base word of Carthage, for thy soul!
with such grandeur in her action, a look so tremendous, and in a voice so powerful, that it is said she even astonished Wilks, her Massinissa; it is certain the audience were struck, and expressed their feelings by

the most uncommon applause. To gain a more complete knowledge of this actress's distinguished faculties of pleasing, the reader must peruse the latter end of Cibber's preface to his *Provoked Husband*. In all the tumults and disturbances of the theatre, on the first night of a new play, which was formerly an hour of more dangerous service to the actors, than it has been of late, Mrs. Oldfield was entirely mistress of herself; she thought it her duty, amidst the most violent opposition and uproar, to exert the utmost of her abilities to serve the author. In the comedy of the *Provoked Husband*, Cibber's enemies tried all their power to get the play condemned. The reconciliation-scene wrought so effectually upon the sensible and generous part of the audience, that the conclusion was greatly and generously approved. Amidst a thousand applauses, Mrs. Oldfield came forward to speak the Epilogue; but, when she had pronounced the first line, —

Methinks.

Methinks I hear some powder'd critic say —
 a man, of no distinguished appearance,
 from the seat next to the orchestra, saluted
 her with a hiss. She fixed her eye upon
 him immediately, made a very short pause,
 and spoke the words *poor creature!* loud
 enough to be heard by the audience, with
 such a look of mingled scorn, pity, and
 contempt, that the most uncommon ap-
 plause justified her conduct in this parti-
 cular, and the poor reptile sunk down with
 fear and trembling.

Lady Townly has been universally said
 to be her *ne plus ultra* in acting. She
 slid so gracefully into the foibles, and dis-
 played so humorously the excesses, of a fine
 woman, too sensible of her charms, too
 confident of her power, and led away by her
 passion for pleasure, that no succeeding
 Lady Townly arrived at her many distin-
 guished excellences in the character. Mrs.

H h 2

Heron,

Heron, her successor, and the beautiful Mrs. Woffington, came nearest to her.

Cibber has, in his preface to this play, very justly commended Wilks for his manly assumed spirit in Lord Townly. Wilks was so much the real fine gentleman, that, in the scene where he was reduced to the necessity of reproaching Lady Townly with her faults, in his warmest anger he mixed such tenderness as was softened into tears. The part has not been equally supported by any actor since.

Mr. Garrick, in Lord Townly, seemed ever to be under restraint. He kept back his natural impetuosity so much, that he lost the spirit of the Provoked Husband.

During the embrace of reconciliation, in speaking these words, --- 'But, from a shipwreck saved, we mingle tears with our embraces,' --- Barry, in happily mixing the various passions which arise in the breast
of

of a good man and reconciled husband; exceeded all conception.

Sir Francis Wronghead has been well acted by several comedians, and especially by Macklin and Yates; that they did not reach the finish of the author may be excused.

Cibber had two passions, which constantly exposed him to severe censure, and sometimes the highest ridicule: his writing tragedy, and acting tragic characters. In both he persisted to the last; for, after he had left the stage many years, he acted Richard III. and very late in life produced his Papal Tyranny. Of his Cardinal Wolsey I have spoken largely in my remarks on Henry the Eighth. Iago he acted in a style so drawling and hypocritical, and wore the mask of honesty so loosely, that Othello, who is not drawn a fool, must have seen the villain through his thin disguises. The truth is, Cibber was endured, in this and other tragic parts, on account

of his general merit in comedy. During this century, the public had not seen perhaps a proper outline of Iago, till Charles Macklin exhibited a faithful picture of this arch-villain, 1744, in the Haymarket-theatre, when Foote was his Othello. It is to Macklin we chiefly owe the many admirable strokes of passion with which Barry surpris'd us in Othello. Let not this be understood to mean the least degradation of that great actor's abilities; for, if Barry had not possess'd a soul capable of receiving the instructions of so great a master, he could not have so pathetically affected an audience. Macklin himself will honestly tell us, that he owed no small part of his knowledge in acting to the lessons he gained from Mr. Chetwood, prompter of Drury-lane theatre.

Cibber persisted so obstinately in acting parts in tragedy, that at last the public grew out of patience, and fairly hissed him

him off the stage. The following anecdote was many years since authenticated to me.

When Thomson's *Sophonisba* was read to the actors, Cibber laid his hand upon Scipio, a character, which, though it appears only in the last act, is of great dignity and importance. For two nights successively, Cibber was as much exploded as any bad actor could be. Williams, by desire of Wilks, made himself master of the part; but he, marching slowly, in great military distinction, from the upper part of the stage, and wearing the same dress as Cibber, was mistaken for him, and met with repeated hisses, joined to the music of catcalls; but, as soon as the audience were undeceived, they converted their groans and hisses to loud and long continued applause.

To aim at general excellence is highly commendable; but to persist, in opposition to the repeated reproofs of the public, is bidding defiance to the general sense.

As a manager, to whom was entrusted the inspection of new plays, operas, and farces, and of receiving the applications of all dramatic writers, Cibber's character does not appear very justifiable. In the Memoirs of Mr. Garrick, I related the story of his insolent behaviour to Mr. Fenton, the author of *Mariamne*, who perhaps fared the worse with him from his being known to be the intimate friend of Mr. Pope. Various complaints were continually circulated in the prints, of his pride and impertinence to authors, especially to the youngest of them, whom he termed *singing-birds*, which he was fond of choking. His callous temper rendered all attacks from the press ineffectual. One story of his unrestrained insolence is worth relating, because it seems, for once, he was mortified with the chastisement which attended his behaviour.

A certain young gentleman applied to Cibber to look over a new dramatic piece.

He

He knocked at his door, and gave into his hands a roll of paper, as he stood on the threshold, the door being but half opened; he desired he would read it, and give him his opinion of it. Cibber turned over the first leaf; and, reading only two lines, returned it with these words, 'Sir, it will not do.' The mortified author left him; and Cibber, full of the adventure, went to Button's coffee-house, and, ready to split with laughter, related the story to Colonel Brett; but he, far from applauding such conduct, put on a severe brow, and treated him with very sharp language. He told him, if the gentleman had resented this vile usage in any manner, he would have been justified.—'Do you pretend, Sir, by reading two lines, and that in a ridiculous cursory manner, to judge of the merit of a whole play?'—Much more, to the same purpose, the colonel added, and when he had done, left the room. Cibber made no reply: he squinted

as usual; took a pinch of snuff; and sat down to ruminate on the affair, under the pretence of reading a Spectator.*

But Cibber was not only accused of treating authors with superciliousness, but with purloining from works which were left in his hands, and which he detained in order to make advantage of them. The author of the Laureat particularly mentions his discouraging a lady who brought him a play, in which a gallant gentleman courts two women at once: this he called an incident entirely improbable. The same author accuses him of afterwards engrafting this very character in one of his own comedies, under the name of Atall.† At this distance of time, the evidence of Cibber's thefts, if any such were committed by him, being removed, nothing

possi-

* Laureat, p. 67.

† Ibidem.

positive can be pronounced concerning them.

The author of the Laureat's description, in what manner this manager and his brothers treated authors, will give a strong picture of overbearing insolence on one side, and of tame submission on the other. 'The court sitting,' says this writer, 'Chancellor Cibber (for the other two, like masters in chancery, sat only for form-sake, did not presume to judge) nodded to the author to open his manuscript. The author begins to read; in which if he failed to please the corrector, he would sometimes condescend to read it for him. If the play struck him very warmly, as it would if he found any thing new in it, and he thought he could particularly shine as an actor, he would then lay down his pipe, (for the chancellor always smoked when he made a decree) and cry, "By G——, there is something in this! I do not know but it may do; I will play such a part."

a part." When the reading was finished, he made his proper corrections, and sometimes without any propriety.*

That Wilks, who was without a learned education, though a man of plain good sense, should submit to the supreme direction of Cibber, respecting new pieces, is not surprising; but that Booth, a scholar, and a better judge, of tragedy at least, than Cibber, should resign his understanding to an inferior, must be resolved into the great love of ease which accompanied him through life. Of Booth's conduct, as a manager, we have not the least or most distant hint of complaint in Cibber's Apology; but the author is extremely querulous with respect to Dogget's and Wilks's behaviour. The former was certainly, in the opinion of the world, as well as Cibber, an original and inimitable actor; a close copier of nature in all her attitudes or disguises; a man, so sensible of

* Laureat, p. 67.

of what his own natural abilities could possibly attain to, that he never ventured upon any part that he was not sure he could properly represent. Of this integrity to himself Cibber produces a remarkable instance. — On his return to Drury-lane, in 1697, Vanbrugh cast him into the part of Lory, in the *Relapse*: after a trial, in which he found his deficiency, he gave it up to Pinkethman. Cibber says, in dressing a character to the greatest exactness, Dogget was remarkably skilful; the least article of whatever habit he wore, seemed, in some degree, to speak and mark the different humour he represented. This, says the writer of a *General View of the Stage*,* I have heard confirmed from one who performed with Dogget; and that he could, with great exactness, paint his face so as to represent the age of seventy, eighty, and ninety, distinctly; which

* Written by Mr. T. Wilks, and published for J. Coote in 1759.

which occasioned Sir Godfrey Kneller to tell him one day, at Button's, that he excelled him in painting; for that he could only copy nature from the originals before him, but that Dogget could vary them at pleasure, and yet keep a close likeness. In the part of Moneytrap, in the Confederacy, he wore an old threadbare black coat, to which he had put new cuffs, pocket-lids, and buttons, on purpose to make its rustiness more conspicuous; the neck was stuffed so as to make him appear round-shouldered; and give his head the greater prominence; his square-toed shoes were large enough to buckle over those he wore in common, which made his legs appear much smaller than usual. — This great actor was perhaps the only one who confined himself to such characters as nature seemed to have made him for. No temptation could allure him to step out of his own circle; from this circumstance, he never appeared to the audience with any
dimin-

diminution of his general excellence. In his temper, he was as true a humourist as Morose in the Silent Woman. Liberty he liked, for he was a staunch whig, but not on the generous principles established at the Revolution; his love of freedom extended little farther than the gratification of his own inclinations. Money he loved; but even that he would reject, if his own method of obtaining it was by any means disturbed; witness his resigning a large income, because the crown, through the interest of Lord Bolingbroke, interfered in favour of Booth. Dogget never interposed in the management of the theatre, except to adjust his own parts in plays, and to take his share of the profits at the treasury. No stock-broker was busier at the Exchange, to take advantage of the rise and fall of the funds, than Dogget. Cibber was as intent upon gaming, and all manner of pleasure, as Dogget could be in trafficking with the stocks. Cibber has lost every
shilling

shilling at hazard or cards, and has been heard to cry out, ' Now I must go home and eat a child !' This attention to the gaming-table would not, we may be assured, render him fitter for his business of the stage. After many an unlucky run, at Tom's coffe-house,* he has arrived at the playhouse in great tranquillity; and then, humming over an opera-tune, he has walked on the stage not well prepared in the part he was to act. Cibber should not have reprehended Powell so severely for neglect and imperfect representation: I have seen him at fault where it was least expected; in parts which he had acted a hundred times, and particularly in Sir Courtly Nice; but Colley dexterously supplied the deficiency of his memory by prolonging his ceremonious bow to the lady, and drawling out ' Your humble servant,

* In Russell-street.

vant, madam,' to an extraordinary length; then taking a pinch of snuff, and strutting deliberately across the stage, he has gravely asked the prompter, what is next?

Wilks was, by nature and education, differently formed: with the warm and generous spirit which becomes a man, he had, from practice and experience, under the tuition of Mr. Ashbury, (a very good actor of the Bettertonian school, and many years manager of the Dublin theatre,) acquired a love for order, decency, and strict regularity, in the business of the scene.— It is asserted by the writer of the Laureat, that, when trusted with the management of the stage by Christopher Rich, he found such confusion, and contempt of all discipline, in the company, that he was reduced to the necessity of challenging, and even fighting several amongst the ring-leaders of these disorders. Powell, says Cibber, declined a duel with Wilks, when he found his antagonist would fight. Pity! that a

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man, possessed of such great talents for acting as Powell, should have rendered them all ineffectual, by his persisting in irregularity and intemperance. In looking over the advertisements of plays, in the first edition of the Spectator, published in 1711 and 1712, I see the name of Powell placed to many very important characters, under the management of Cibber, Dogget, and Wilks : to Falstaff, to Lear, Leon, Cortez in the Indian Emperor, and many others. Even Wilks would not be so partial, during Powell's ability to act, as to give these important parts to his friend Mills. Addison and Steele continued their regard and countenance, as long as they could be of service, to this unhappy man. That he acted Portius, in Cato, 1713, must have been with the author's approbation; and this, I believe, was Powell's last part, in a new play, of any consequence. He was so hunted by the sheriff's officers, for debt, that he usually walked the streets with

with his sword in his hand, (sheathed,) in terrorem to his pursuers. If he saw any of them at a distance, he would roar out, 'Get on the other side of the way, you dog! and the bailiff, who knew his old customer, would most obligingly answer, 'We do not want you *now*, Master Powell.' He was alive in the year 1717; I saw, many years since, a play-bill for his benefit, dated that year. The unhappy George Powell, whose fault was too great a passion for social pleasure, was certainly an actor of genius; but, in his moral conduct, he was, amongst the players, what Edmund Smith, the author of *Phædra* and *Hippolitus*, was amongst the poets: not all the care and caution of Smith's Oxford-friends, and his polite acquaintance at London, could keep him either decent in dress, or regular in behaviour.

To return to Wilks. What could this man of sobriety and habitual regularity, do with such partners as a gamester and a

hunter after the stocks ? Cibber and Dogget wanted not abilities to go through the various business of the theatre ; but their inclinations carried them to their two dear Dulcineas, pleasure and profit.

Cibber draws an advantageous character of Dogget, as a man of sense, and one who understood business ; but, surely his giving up near 800l. or 1000l. per annum, on another man's being advanced to an equal degree of happiness with himself, or from a paltry grudge or pique to a worthy man, who sometimes thwarted his pride, gives no good proof of the soundness of his intellects. The great complaint of Cibber and Dogget, against their partner, Wilks, was his impetuous and overbearing temper. On that account, and that only, Dogget told Cibber (says the latter) he gave up his income ; and, for that cause, the same informer assures us, several actors of Drury-lane theatre forsook their old masters, and listed with John Rich, at Lincoln's-

coln's-inn-fields. I shall not take the evidence of two such partial and interested men against so honest and steady a character, in the maintenance of every thing that was decent, just, and generous, as that of Robert Wilks. Dogget sacrificed to his own humour, when he resigned his share of the licence or patent. When Quin, Walker, and Ryan, left Drury-lane theatre, it was not from a dislike to Wilks, but from an offer of advanced salary, with the possession of the capital parts. Ryan chose 5l. per week, at Lincoln's-inn-fields, with the part of Hamlet, in preference to Laertes, in the same play, and 5os. at Drury-lane; and Quin preferred the acceptance of the same, or a larger salary, offered from Rich, with Tamerlane, and Brutus in Julius Cæsar, instead of inferior parts in the same plays with what he thought a small pittance. The mean subterfuge of Cibber, to cloke his spleen to Wilks by the sufferage of

others, is visible. But this good man gave Dogget and Cibber still farther provocations. In the decorations of plays, they grudged, from mean oeconomy, every necessary expence, while his spirit took pleasure in dressing every character as it ought to be, and furnishing such other theatric ornaments as the dramatic piece required.

Of the managers, Booth, Wilks, and Cibber, the last, for many reasons, was the least esteemed by the players. He spared no pains, it is true, to instruct the actors in such characters as he drew in his own pieces; but he could not forbear, at times, wantonly throwing out farcasms on the inferior performers.* Cibber was
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* When the younger Mills was once rehearsing *Scandal*, in *Love for Love*, a part which Booth had formerly acted, Mills, in that part of the play where *Scandal* breaks out into the exclamation of 'Death
and

certainly least esteemed by the actors of the three great masters; the Laureat goes farther, and avers that he was absolutely odious to them. I will not go so far; but I have been told, that the players had no hold on any of his passions, to accomplish their views, except his timidity. Victor informed me, that Bickerstaffe, a comedian whose benefit-play Steele good-naturedly recommends to the public, in the Tatler, on account of his being, as he says, his relation, had acquired an income of 4l. per week. Cibber, in an œconomical fit, retrenched him of half. The man who had a family, was stricken at the sudden diminution of his allowance; and, knowing whence his misfortune was derived, waited on Cibber, and flatly told him,

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that

and hell! where is Valentine?" observed, that poor Mr. Booth forgot the 'Death and hell, &c.' Cibber, with a contemptuous smile, told him, there was more beauty in Booth's forgetfulness than in all he remembered.

that as he could not subsist on the small sum to which he had reduced his salary, he must call the author of his distress to an account, for that it would be easier to him to lose his life than to starve. The affrighted Cibber told him, he should receive an answer from him on Saturday next. Bickerstaffe found, on that day, his usual income was continued.

However Cibber might be disliked by the players, it is certain that Wilks was esteemed and respected by them. — Booth was valued and beloved as their companion, who mixed in their society and took part in their interests. When Harper remonstrated to him, that Shepherd's income was larger than his by 20s. per week, though he presumed, he said, that his own industry and variety of business were not inferior to Shepherd's, Booth said, in reply, assenting to the truth of what he had affirmed, ' Suppose now, Harper, we should make you both equal, by reducing his

his salary to yours?' — 'By no means (said the other); I would not injure Mr. Shepherd for the world; I would only, by your favour, Sir, honestly serve myself.' The manager said no more; on pay-day Harper found his weekly allowance increased by an addition of twenty shillings. However trifling these little stories may seem, they throw more light on a distinguished character than matters of seemingly more importance. The truth is, the love and esteem of the actors went along with Booth and Wilks; to Cibber they paid no farther regard than what his power and their fear inspired.

There is a little open room in Drury-lane theatre, called the Settle; it is separated from the stage and the scene-room by a wainscot inclosure. It was formerly, before the great green-room was built, a place for many of the actors to retire to, between the acts, during the time of action and rehearsal. From time out of
mind,

mind, till about the year 1740, to this place a pretty large number of comedians used to resort constantly after dinner, which, at that time, was generally over at two o'clock. Here they talked over the news and politics of the day, though, indeed, they were no great politicians; for players are generally king's men. Here they cracked their jokes, indulged in little fallies of pleasantry, and laughed in good humour at their mutual follies and adventures. Kings, footmen, aldermen, cardinals, cobblers, princes, judges, link-boys, and fine gentlemen, in short all characters, were mingled together; and, from this seeming chaos of confusion, arose a harmony of mirth, which contributed not a little to reconcile them to their various situations in the theatre. Wilks came amongst them sometimes; Booth, who loved the bagatelle, oftener: he liked to converse with them freely, and hear their jokes and remarks on each other; and if, from any
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accidental story or information, these good men, I mean Wilks and Booth, could make any individual happy, they laid hold of the offered opportunity. Cibber seldom came amongst the *settlers*; tyrants fear, as they know they are feared.

Cibber, with propriety enough, perhaps, confines his narrative to the history of those actors who were dead. But how came he to forget Dicky Norris and Bullock, men of acknowledged merit, who had been numbered with the dead several years before he published his Apology? Norris was so much a favourite of the public, ever since he had acted the part of Jubilee Dicky, in the Trip to the Jubilee, that the name of Dicky was often annexed, in the play-house bills, to any character he acted.--- In the first edition of the Spectator, in the advertisement of the Beaux Stratagem, he is called Dicky Scrub. He was, in size, low and little, but not ill made, with an expressive, truly-comic, countenance, and

and a shrill, clear, and audible, voice.--- Mrs. Oldfield thought him an excellent figure for a cuckold. When, upon the indisposition of Norris, Cibber undertook to play Barnaby Brittle, in the Wanton Wife, his action was generally applauded; but, when Cibber said to Oldfield, ‘ Nanny, how do you like your new husband? ’ she replied, ‘ Why, very well, but not half so well as Dicky Norris? ’ — ‘ How so? ’ — ‘ Why, you are too important in your figure for one of the horned race; but Norris has such a diminutive form, and so sneaking a look, that he seems formed on purpose for wearing horns, and I make him a cuckold always with a hearty good will.’*

In his last illness, he was attended by an eminent physician, who gave him hopes of recovery. ‘ Doctor,’ said the sick man, ‘ when

* Chetwood, &c.

‘ when the wheels of a watch are quite decayed, do you think they can be repaired ?’

—— ‘ No, by no art in the world.’ ——

‘ Then, Sir,’ says Norris, ‘ it is the same case with me ; all the wheels of my machine are absolutely, through time, quite worn out, and nothing can restore them to their accustomed force.’ —— Norris died about the year 1725.

Bullock was an actor of great glee and much comic vivacity. He was, in his person, large ; with a lively countenance, full of humorous information. Steele, in the *Tatler*, speaks, with his usual kind sensibility, of Norris, Bullock, and Pinkethman, and their powers of raising mirth. The historian of the two stages says, that Bullock ‘ is not only the best of actors, but so modest, that he is insensible of his own merit.’ The comic ability of Bullock was confirmed to me by Mr. Macklin, who assured me, very lately, that he was, in his department, a true genius of the stage.

stage. I have seen him act several parts with great applause; especially the Spanish Friar, at a time when he was above eighty.

Cibber, agreeably to his adopted plan of confining his narrative to deceased actors, in his Apology spoke only in general terms of Mrs. Porter's merit in tragedy; but, although this volume is enlarged to a much greater bulk than I intended, I cannot omit some well-authenticated anecdotes relating to this most valuable and respected actress; who was not only an ornament of the stage, but of human nature.

She was first taken notice of by Betterton; who saw her act, when a child, the Genius of Britain, in a Lord-Mayor's Pageant, in the reign of Charles or James II. Mrs. Porter always spoke of Betterton with great respect and veneration. She was so little, when first under his tuition, that he threatened her, if she did not speak and act as he would have her, to put her into a fruit-woman's basket and cover her

her with a vine-leaf. It was the custom of the fruit-women, formerly, to stand fronting the pit, with their backs to the stage; and their oranges, and other fruit, covered with vine-leaves.

Mrs. Porter was ever welcome to the best and most respectable families in London. Oldfield and this actress rose gradually to excellence and fame much about the same time. They conversed together on the best terms; Porter's gravity was a contrast to the sprightliness of Oldfield, who would often, in jest, call her her mother.

She lived at Heywood-hill, near Hendon. After the play, she went home in a one-horse chaise; her constant companions were a book and a brace of horse-pistols. The dislocation of her thigh-bone was attended with a circumstance that deserves to be recorded. In the summer of 1731, as she was taking the air in her one-horse chaise, she was stopped by a highwayman,

wayman, who demanded her money. She had the courage to present one of her pistols to him: the man, who perhaps had only with him the appearance of fire-arms, assured her that he was no common thief; that robbing on the highway was not to him a matter of choice, but necessity, and in order to relieve the wants of his poor distressed family. He informed her, at the same time, where he lived; and told her such a melancholy story, that she gave him all the money in her purse, which was about ten guineas. The man left her: upon this she gave a lash to the horse; he suddenly started out of the track, and the chaise was overthrown; this occasioned the dislocation of her thigh-bone. Let it be remembered, to her honour, that notwithstanding this unlucky and painful accident, she made strict enquiry after the robber; and, finding that he had not deceived her, she raised amongst her acquaintance about sixty pounds, which she
took

took care to send him. Such an action, in a person of high rank, would have been celebrated as something great and heroic: the feeling mind will make no distinction between the generosity of an actress and that of a princess.

I have already observed, that she was esteemed the genuine successor of Mrs. Barry, whose theatrical page she had been when very young.

When the scene was not agitated with passion, to the general spectator she did not give equal pleasure; the recitation of fact or sentiment was so modulated, as to resemble musical cadence rather than speaking, and this rendered her acting in comedy somewhat cold and ineffectual. —

Where the passions predominated, she exerted her powers to a supreme degree; she seemed then to be another person, and to be formed with that noble and enthusiastic ardour which was capable of rousing the coldest auditor to an equal animation,

Her deportment was dignified with graceful ease, and her action the result of the passion she felt.

After the misfortune of her dislocated limb, and in a very advanced age, I saw her act many of her principal characters with much vigour and great applause, and, in particular, Clytemnestra in Thomson's *Agamemnon*.* In drawing this character, the author has varied from the idea of Æschylus; and, I think with great propriety, he has followed the original drawing of Homer, who gives some strokes of tenderness to this princess, and makes her yield with reluctance to the persuasions of Ægisthus; who could not entirely subdue her affection

* Thomson, in reading his play of *Agamemnon* to the actors, in the green-room, pronounced every line with such a broad Scotch accent, that they could not restrain themselves from a loud laugh. Upon this, the author good-naturedly said to the manager, 'Do you, Sir, take my play, and go on with it; for, though I can write a tragedy, I find I cannot read one.'

affection to her husband, till he had removed the faithful bard, placed about her by Agamemnon as her counsellor and adviser.

In this tragedy, Mrs. Porter gave a striking proof of her great power in expressing the passions. — Her action and deportment, through the part of Clytemnestra, marked the consummate actress. In the second act, when, in the distress of her mind from conscious guilt, she is torn with conflicting passions at the approach of her injured husband, the force of her action and expression, when she said to her attendant —

Bring me my children hither; they may perhaps
relieve me—

struck the audience with astonishment, who expressed the highest approbation by loud and reiterated applauses.

In her person she was tall and well-shaped; of a fair complexion, but not handsome; her voice was harsh and unpleasing. She elevated herself above all

personal defects by her exquisite judgement. Though she greatly admired Betterton, and had seen all the old actors of merit, she was much charmed with Mr. Garrick, and lamented her want of youth and vigour to exert her skill with so great a genius.

Mrs. Porter outlived her annuity; and, in a very advanced age, was principally supported by a very worthy nobleman,* who made her a present of a new comedy, and permitted her to publish it, for her benefit, by subscription. She died about the year 1762. When Dr. Johnson, some years before her death, paid her a visit, she appeared to him so wrinkled, that, he said, a picture of old age in the abstract might be taken from her countenance. Mrs. Porter lived some time with Mrs. Cotterell, relict of Colonel Cotterell, and Mrs. Lewis, who,

~~her voice was heard and un-~~
 * Lord Cornbury.

who, I believe, now resides in the Circus at Bath.*

To return to Cibber. Envy is, I fear, annexed so closely to mankind in general, and more especially to the condition of a player, from his circumscribed situation; that we are not to wonder that Cibber had his share of it. — He never heartily joined the public voice in the approbation of Mr. Garrick; he shrunk from it as if he was hurt by it.

Mr. Garrick asked him if he had not in his possession, a comedy or two of his own writing. — ‘What then?’ said Cibber. — ‘I should be glad to have the honour of bringing it into the world.’ — ‘Who have you to act it?’ — ‘Why, there are (said Garrick) Clive and Pritchard, myself, and

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some

* The anecdotes relating to Mrs. Porter, were communicated to me by an elderly gentlewoman, lately dead, an acquaintance of Dr. Johnson, who often visited her; by one who was a frequenter of the theatres for near sixty years; and others.

some others,' whom he named. — 'No! (said the old man, taking a pinch of snuff, with great nonchalance) it won't do.' —

Foote often declared, that Cibber would allow no higher merit to Garrick than his acting Fribble. At a meeting of Cibber, Garrick, Foote, and others, at Sir F. Blake Delaval's, Garrick imprudently drew on himself a rebuke from Cibber. The conversation happened to turn upon old actors, and their peculiar manner of playing. Mr. Garrick observed, that the old style of acting was banishing the stage, and would not go down. 'How do you know? (said Cibber); you never tried it.'

He either did not see, or would not acknowledge he saw, the merit of Elrington, an actor approved by the best judges in England and Ireland. Elrington, when a young man, wished to act the part of Torrismond, in the Spanish Frier; this request Cibber opposed with all his might. A nobleman of great eminence sent for

him,

him, and desired he would give his reasons for not permitting the young player to try his abilities in a favourite part. 'My Lord (said Cibber) it is not with us as with you; your Lordship is sensible, that there is no difficulty in filling places at court; you cannot be at a loss for persons to act their parts there. But I assure you it is quite otherwise in our theatrical world; if we should invest people with characters who are incapable to support them, we should be undone.'

But Cibber was sufficiently mortified afterwards for his behaviour to Elrington; who, during the indisposition of Booth, in the year 1729, was the great support of Drury-lane. The managers were so well convinced of his importance to them, that they offered him his own conditions if he would engage with them for a term of years. Elrington, with great modesty, replied: 'I am truly sensible of the value of your offer; but in Ireland I am so well

rewarded for my services, that I cannot think of leaving it on any consideration. There is not (added he) a gentleman's house in that kingdom to which I am not a welcome visitor. Elrington died at Dublin, greatly lamented, July 22, 1732.

To conclude. As a writer of comedies, Cibber must be placed in a very superior rank; before Jeremy Collier attacked the profaneness of dramatic writers, he first taught the stage to talk decently and morally. He was properly the inventor of the higher comedy, a species of the drama in which persons of high birth and eminent rank are introduced; for the faint efforts, in that style, of Etheridge and Steele, in *Sir Foppling Flutter* and the *Funeral*, are scarcely worthy our notice. As a manager of a theatre, his behaviour to authors I have proved to have been illiberal and insolent; his treatment of the actors has been generally condemned as unfriendly, if not tyrannical. As a
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member of society at large, little can be said in his praise. — Soon after, he had sold his share in the patent for a very large sum, to Mr. Highmore, he applied to the Duke of Grafton for a patent, in favour of his son Theophilus, because Highmore would not comply with the young man's demands. The Duke saw through the injustice of the act, and peremptorily refused to gratify the unreasonable request of his old acquaintance, Colley. Victor, from whom I received my information, very honestly opposed this unjust behaviour of his friend, Cibber; who, after having parted with his share in the old patent, for more perhaps than its value, would have rendered it worthless by a new one.

His love of gaming rendered him a neglectful father, and unkind to his family and relations. The moral honesty of a gamester, depending so much on the revolutions of chance, cannot safely be relied on.

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It must be granted, that, although Cibber was a gamester, he never was charged with being a cheat or gambler. A dupe to his own passions he certainly was, and probably to the fraudulent practices of others; but he never merited the odious nick-name of a black-leg.

His contempt of religion was justly censured by many. Dennis, in a letter to Sir John Edgar, alias Sir Richard Steele, charges him with spitting at a picture of our Saviour at Bath. At Tunbridge, I have been informed by Dr. Johnson, Cibber entered into a conversation with honest Mr. William Whiston, with a view to insult him; but Whiston cut him short, by telling him at once, that he could possibly hold no discourse with him; for that he was himself a clergyman; and Cibber was a player, and was besides, as he had heard, a pimp.

Cibber must have raised considerable contributions on the public by his works.

To

To say nothing of the sums accumulated by dedications,* benefits, and the sale of his plays singly, his dramatic works, in quarto, by subscription, published 1721, produced him a considerable sum of money.

It is computed that he gained, by the excellent Apology for his Life, no less than the sum of 1500l.

Pope's merciless treatment of Cibber was originally owing to the latter's attack upon the farce of *Three Hours after Marriage*, in the character of Bayes in the *Rehearsal*; and, though it is evident Pope severely felt the ridicule of the narrative in Cibber's First Epistle, the reader of his Second Letter will be convinced, that the Laureat, notwithstanding his affectation of indifference, did not relish the being transmitted to posterity with Pope's indelible marks of infamy upon him.

Though

* King George I. gave him a hundred pounds; for his dedication of the *Nonjuror*.

Though the superior spirit of Swift controuled the actions and regulated the politics of Pope, the latter had no influence of that kind upon the Dean. He was not induced by his friend's dislike to Cibber, to attack him in any part of his writings, except, I believe, in his short ridicule on his Birth-day Odes. As soon as Cibber's Apology reached Dublin, Falkner, the printer, sent it to the Dean of St. Patrick's, who told him, next day, that Cibber's book had captivated him; he sat up all night to read it through. When Falkner gave information of this to Cibber, he shed tears of joy.

Cibber died in the eighty-seventh year of his age, 1758. The money he had saved in the latter part of his life, he left with great propriety to his grand-children. In person, he was of the middle-size; and, though strait, not well-shaped. I have seen a mezzotinto of him, from a painting of Signor Amiconi, in the character of Lord Foppington, very like him.

I must

I must not forget to relate, that the comedy of the Nonjuror, written by Cibber, and acted in 1717, exposed the author to innumerable and virulent attacks from the high tory and Jacobite parties. The generous principles of free government, established at the coronation of King William and Queen Mary, had not, at that time, taken such deep root as they have since done. Many people then survived, who had been attached from education, and some perhaps from principle, to the exiled family. Prejudices, imbibed in the early part of life, are not easily subdued; but, besides those who acted on these motives, there were many who were influenced from meaner inducements. Cibber's play was written with a view to justify the doctrines inculcated by the Revolution, and to open the eyes of the prejudiced in favour of the House of Hanover. The play met with applause and
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with much success. Cibber artfully transferred the odium of imposture from the nonjuring clergyman to the popish priest.

In spite of his affecting to despise party-men and party-principles, Pope, in his letters to Jervas and Mr. Digby, discovered no little vexation at the success of the Nonjuror; for that was, with him, a terrible symptom of the decay of poetry.

The play is a good imitation of Moliere's *Tartuffe*; and deserves commendation, if it were for the sake only of the fine portrait of an amiable young lady. There is, not, in all dramatic poetry, a more sprightly, good-natured, and generous, coquette, than Maria; which is admirably acted by Mrs. Abington, under the name of Charlotte, borrowed from the Nonjuror by Bickerstaffe in his *Hypocrite*.

Cibber was violently attacked from the prints, chiefly on account of his politics, but pretendedly for his management of the theatre, his behaviour to authors, and for his

his acting. If we except the remarks on plays and players by the authors of the Tatler and Spectator, the theatrical observations in those days were coarse and illiberal, when compared to what we read in our present daily and other periodical papers. The prints of our days are generally conducted by men of education, and well acquainted with the polite arts. Nor should the actor think himself above condescending to hearken to their advice and to attend to their reprehension, or suppose himself or his art injured by their free examination of his merits.

Sir Joshua Reynolds, in his excellent notes on Fresnoy, has generously admitted, that, if the painter was to be informed of the remarks every spectator would necessarily make on his picture, when exposed to public view, he would gain considerable advantage from them. This may be applied to acting, *a fortiori*, as every man must be a more adequate judge of stage-

stage-representation than of painting. In every nation in Europe, the productions of art are open to examination. In a free country, like ours, the legislators, and the acts of legislature itself, are not exempt from free examination. A poem, a picture, a statue, a piece of music, the action of a player, are all offered to the public eye, and, from their approbation or censure, must stand or fall. The actor, while he continues to be of value, will be an object of criticism. It is, indeed, a test of his consequence; and, when that is withdrawn, he will sink to nothing. Parties there will be, and prejudices must exist; but the public is fair in its determination, and will not permit an artist of merit to suffer by unjust remarks or illiberal censures.

Dr. Warburton affected to despise the learning of Magazines and Reviews. He might, perhaps, receive no addition to his acquirements by perusing them; but the good people of England, I will presume

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to aver, have been much improved, within these twenty or thirty years, by that variety of literature and science which has been every where disseminated in these vehicles ; nor do I think all ranks of people could be more innocently or more profitably employed, than in acquiring knowledge so readily, and with such little expence of time and money.

END OF VOL. III. AND LAST.

VOL. III. L 1 Postscript.

P O S T S C R I P T.

THE generous encouragement the public gave the **LIFE OF MR. GARRICK**, called for my warmest and most grateful acknowledgements; nor am I less indebted to them for their favourable reception of my **DRAMATIC MISCELLANIES**.—Several writers of the Reviews and Magazines, and most of the periodical critics, have been candid and generous panegyrists of my last as well as first Essay on Theatrical Subjects.

The Monthly Reviewer of June last, quitting all pretensions to candour and impartiality, has insidiously blended aukward and unsubstantial praise, with unjust and malicious censure.

Had he not closed his remarks on my book with a charge equally false and infamous, I had not in all probability taken
notice

notice of his futile criticisms. Not satisfied with lessening, by unjust inferences and affected ridicule, the merit of the *Miscellanies*, he has in plain terms accused me of being a *propagator of slander and a lover of scandal*.

Of this heavy and unjust charge, before I have closed my Postscript, I make no doubt I shall clear myself, to the satisfaction of my readers. But how the modest and pious Proprietor of the *Monthly Review*, *Ralph Griffiths* of Turnham Green, can ever exonerate himself from having been the *first Editor and Publisher* of the *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, I am not enough concerned to enquire. It surely did not become this man to put stones into his pocket to throw at his old acquaintance.

He sets out with an eulogium on my expertness and abilities in writing anecdotes, &c. But unluckily, he betrays his real meaning by the coarseness of his

compliment, for which I cannot thank him. "*In these things* (he says) *I am a successful dealer and a chapman.*" Here is hostility in the very opening of his criticism.

A *fourth*, if not indeed a *third* part of my book, he softly and insidiously condemns; by saying, that 'the verbal criticisms, we shall here, and in every part of the work, pass over, as they are in our opinion, the *least happy parts of these Miscellanies.*" This is the accomplished art of condemning more than two hundred and fifty remarks, by a mock affectation of mercy.

The Reviewer may possibly be unacquainted with a reason, why a certain Commentator, I mean Mr. *Steevens*, might earnestly wish, that all my observations on Shakspeare should be universally condemned and devoted to oblivion.

I hope it still lives in that gentleman's memory, that about fifteen years since, when he was preparing an edition of Shakspeare, which was published in 1773, he
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solicited many of his learned acquaintance to favour him with their notes. He will, I hope, likewise recollect, that at that time he was almost constantly at my shop.

Having from my long admiration of Shakspeare, written on the blank leaves of Johnson's first edition bound up for that purpose, several loose observations on many of the plays, I offered to transcribe such as I thought most worthy of notice, and present them to Mr. Steevens, that he might at his leisure select such as should best seem to answer his purpose, and insert them in his projected edition. The offer was accepted with much seeming complacency; and a pretty large quantity of notes were delivered to the Commentator.

In the progress of the work, and I believe just before the impression was finished, I asked Mr. Steevens if any of my notes would be so happily distinguished, as to enjoy a place in the new edition. He an-

swered to this purpose, ' that he was entirely ignorant of the matter ; for that the notes were under the inspection of Dr. Farmer, of Emanuel College, Cambridge ; and the distribution of them was vested in him. '*

When the new edition was published, I must confess I felt my vanity was disappointed ; for none of my observations on my favourite author, were owned or noticed ; nor has a single note been restored to the writer, or any apology made for a conduct so uncivil and injurious. I forgot indeed that I was a tradesman, and though I had part of my education at an University, † and was through life a companion of my superiors, yet, still I was not a gentleman.

Notwithstanding this treatment, I was unwilling to think the Commentator had so mean an opinion of my abilities, as not to think me capable of producing some
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* Vide Dr. Farmer's Letter, towards the end of the Postscript.

† The University of Edinburgh, in the years 1728 and 1729.

tolerable remarks on Shakspeare. Nor was I thoroughly convinced of his extreme aversion to any thing I could produce, till my failure in trade, in the beginning of the year 1778.

A great number of valuable friends endeavoured to contribute to my re-establishment; and none indeed were more active to serve me, than those who had suffered most by my misfortune. But all their efforts might possibly have been fruitless, if my great and good friend Dr. Johnson, had not exerted all his power in my behalf. He called upon the Commentator, amongst others, to assist him. He was very kind; and I acknowledged, and do still acknowledge his kindness: nor could the gentleman's putting me in mind of his favour, by a letter occasioned by a certain dispute not necessary to be mentioned here, dissolve the obligation. Dr. Johnson prevailed on Mr. Sheridan, Patentee of Drury-lane theatre,

to let me have a benefit, which he granted on the most liberal terms.

Though all this made an appearance of a restoration, yet, I knew I could ill provide for my family by the utmost industry, from the profits of a small stock; the rent and taxes of my house amounting to near 84l.

About this time, I was called upon by Mr. M. Mason, Editor of *Maffinger*, to write that author's Life. When I had finished it, I added proposals for my *Dramatic Miscellanies*. The Life of *Maffinger* I addressed to Dr. Johnson, who was much pleased with the attention I paid him.

I sent copies of this Essay in Biography, to several persons of eminence, and amongst the rest to Mr. Garrick: this happened about six or seven weeks before his death—he sent me by his brother, Mr. George Garrick, a very obliging message: he was hurried, he said, in business, or
would

would have waited on me. He had read over my *Life of Massinger* two or three times, with great pleasure; and as for the project of the *Dramatic Miscellanies*, he would certainly promote it to the utmost of his power. This was the last message I received from that great and liberal minded man.

When I shewed my proposals to Mr. Steevens, he read them over, and asked me the sum I intended to fix for my two volumes in 8vo. I told him the usual price. "No, no (said he) you must call on your Subscribers to give two guineas for these volumes."

The utter contempt in which he seemed to behold me, and the glaring ridicule of the advice, disenchanting me at once: he seemed plainly to consider me as the lowest and most impudent of the human species. I said to him with some emotion, "Do you think, Sir, that I am so utterly unacquainted with myself, as to exact an

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exorbitant price for my trifles? Shall I demand four times as much for two volumes as men of acknowledged abilities estimate theirs? No, Sir." He persisted that I ought at least to value them at one guinea. I concluded the irksome conversation by assuring him, the price should be 10s. 6d. for the two volumes, in boards.

Since that time, his visits at my shop became less frequent. I was not sorry: for such duplicity of intention, under the shew of uncommon civility, with a conversation extremely engaging, and always accompanied with a ready and perpetual smile, cannot, I suppose, be easily paralleled.

Have I not, then, some reason to suspect that the Commentator entertained a better opinion of my observations, than he was willing to own? And that his eager desire of burying them in oblivion, originated from something more than their impotence?

But

But the most unhappy circumstance in the case, is, that many of the remarks rejected by the Commentator, have been approved by some of the most accomplished gentlemen of the age, persons eminent for learning and critical sagacity.

The reader sees that the honest Reviewer, though unconnected with him, as I am loudly told from Turnham Green, embraces the Commentator's scheme of entirely suppressing my notes on Shakspeare.

The fourth part of the book is absolutely consigned to dust, under the tender but treacherous pretence of its being *the least happy part of the composition*. I should be glad to know what this man calls the *happy* part of the book? For, except his undistinguished praises, bestowed in a heap on the first and second parts of Henry the IVth and Henry the VIIIth, without quotation or argument to support them, I cannot pick out a single play on which he has not fixed his mark of reprobation; he
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mutters, indeed, here and there, the words, judicious remarks on actors, with anecdotes, &c. &c.

Is it the practice of other periodical examiners of books, to pass over any part of a work in this slight and peremptory manner? Honest Hamilton, in his Critical Review, does not affect this *hauteur*; nor does the worthy and learned Dr. Maty, whose established character of impartiality, renders his praise or censure of more importance,

I will appeal to the Monthly Reviewer himself, if in my case, he has not acted contrary to his own established practice, which generally is, to examine with seeming fairness at least, whatever an author had proposed, and to approve or condemn, after weighing the evidence produced on both sides.

If Mr. Griffiths had selected many of the least forcible notes, and candidly brought forward some by which the readers
of

of Shakspeare might possibly have received information, I could not have alledged against him any just cause of complaint.

His constant method of praise and censure, is certainly not founded upon justice. His mere *ipse dixit* passes for reason, argument, and discussion.

In my observations upon All's Well that Ends Well, he finds nothing worth notice, but a too high condemnation of Parolles and a too great depreciation of Bessus. But what is the bare assertion of the Monthly Reviewer, without a single argument alledged to support it? Should the labours of a writer, who has attentively considered his subject, be sacrificed to a critic's caprice; to one who appears to be his enemy?

To trace the origin of the fool, in our old English comedies, the play of All's Well that Ends Well, presented to me a fair occasion: I vindicated the rights of mankind, to the exertion of the risible faculties,

ties. A party-coloured Zany with a cap and bells, was to our old feudal Monarchs in their palaces, and the Barons in their castles, the coarse engine of mirth which the solemn laws of Chivalry would admit. But my chief view in discussing this subject, was to point out to my reader, the wonderful effect which our great poet, by his inimitable skill, had produced upon the minds of an English audience, from this single engine. As the Monthly Review affects to speak to every play of Shakspeare which had passed through my hands, we may reasonably ask how came it to pass, that he omitted this part, I will presume to say, of a well considered inquiry. But the gentleman had merrier game in view, which was, by the application of a line from Churchill, to turn me into ridicule. — I had given the reader a green-room narrative of Mr. Garrick's resolution to revive *King and No King*; and I assigned probable reasons for his quitting his project.

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This I chiefly attributed to the plot itself, seemingly founded on incest; for Arbaces is violently enamoured of his supposed sister. I farther observed, that Bel-fus, a pander and a thrice-beaten coward, buffeted and kicked by almost every character in the play, though an officer in the army, would not in these times be tolerated.

But gentle dullness ever loves a joke; and for this story I was by the Reviewer described to be *Statesman* all over.

In the progress of his Review, he arrives at my remarks on the plays of Ben Jonson, which, in his usual authoritative stile, he pronounces to be too severe—This being without proof, I hope my reader will allow, deserves no answer.

I beg the reader to observe one species of criticism peculiar to this gentleman; wherever I produce an authority to support my remarks, he is determined at all events to destroy it.

The verses of L. Diggs, which I had brought to support my observation, that
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the best plays of Jonson were not followed by the people with an equal ardour to those of his competitor, Shakspeare, he utterly rejects. But the judicious Mr. Malone is happily of a contrary opinion; he gives them a place in his Supplemental volumes to Shakspeare. The Reviewer's comparing the lines of Diggs to those of Gardiner, placed before the works of Fletcher, is impertinent. Gardiner's inflated praises of his friend, Fletcher, seemed to be written with a view to rob Beaumont of his share in these dramas, which were attributed by others to both. The verses of Diggs on Jonson are little more than the relation of a fact.

This Reviewer knew, too, that I did not entirely ground my opinion of surly Ben upon these verses; but with his usual honesty, he has suppressed the evidence.

It is not speaking too harshly of him to say, that when he steps out of his way to give us theatrical intelligence, he is a mere babbler. He says that Garrick taught

taught Woodward to act Bobadil, from the manner of Ben Jonson the actor.

Woodward was older than his master by several years, and was an actor when a boy about eighteen, under the care of Giffard in Goodman's-field, in 1729 or 1730.

Many years before our Roscius had trod the stage, I saw him play one of the Mob in Julius Cæsar at the same theatre, where Jonson acted the part of the Cobler: so that Woodward could stand in need of no instruction from Garrick, to act after the manner of the veteran actor. Of the original, or if you please, the Jonsonian manner of Woodward's rehearsing Bobadil, in the absence of Roscius, and what passed between them on the stage upon it, I gave a particular narrative; but this, it seems, did not merit the worthy Reviewer's attention.

He condescends to praise my judgment, with respect to Davenant's alteration of Macbeth; and this is almost all that he

says upon that great masterpiece of our inimitable author. I had introduced certain reasons why Shakspeare had chosen the subject of Macbeth to be represented before his great patron, King James; and with some probability, had endeavoured to prove his honest intention to unite the two kingdoms in a close bond of amity, by inserting in his play the restoration of a rightful King of Scotland, by the assistance of the English.

I had endeavoured to rectify some mistakes of the great Commentator, Steevens; but it was hopeless to expect any notice would be taken of them.

There is one unvaried conduct in the Reviewer, which will, I believe, surprise every body: that although my book was professedly written to celebrate the great comedians, and particularly our inimitable Roscius, that of this part of my plan he has scarce taken any notice. Almost every page of my observations on
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Macbeth, is crowded with remarks, and I hope not very superficial, on the superior beauties of Garrick's action. This man pretends to be his great admirer; but all that has been said to exemplify his wonderful skill, is buried in profound silence.

After a summary dispatch of Macbeth, the Reviewer makes some profound reflections on the state of learning during the Civil Wars and the usurpation of Cromwell. 'Notwithstanding (he says) the labours and silent studies of Milton, *literature seems to have slept.*'

Pray, learned Sir, what do you mean by silent studies? for, I profess I do not understand you. Of what service can silent studies be to a nation? I will inform this critic, who seems ignorant of the matter, that Milton, after the beheading of the King, was employed in defending the action, in writing letters, as Secretary of State to the Republic; and was afterwards

employed in the same office by the Usurper.

But is it true that literature slept during the Civil Wars? This man is an excellent Aristarchus to sit in the chair of judgment, and decide upon the property and reputation of authors!—The meanest adept in the History of English Learning could have told him, that from the beginning of the Civil Wars, in 1641, to the Restoration in 1660, more illustrious men flourished in all arts and sciences, and more excellent and valuable books were written and published, than in any forty years which the Reviewer can name.

In divinity, the learned and excellent Hammond published during that period, his admired Commentary on the New Testament, and many other works. Cudworth in that period, laid the foundation of his noble work called, The Intellectual System. Lightfoot and Pocock excelled in the propagation of Oriental Learning.—

Wilkins,

Wilkins, that great genius, published his Swift Messenger, and many other curious works; where the Air Balloons, so much the object of admiration, may be found in embryo.* In mathematics, Oughtred, Barrow, and Wallis, excelled.—Sir William Dugdale and Mr. Dodsworth opened all the treasures of history and antiquity. That great work, the *Monasticon Anglicanum* was then printed and published. The *Antiquities of Warwick* were produced by Dugdale in 1655; and during this period he laid the foundation of that laborious work, *The Baronage of England*. Rushworth's *Historical Collection* are to this day the standard of historic truth.—About the same time, I mean in the troubles, or during the usurpation of Cromwell, King's Vale Royal of Cheshire, saw the light. Somner, too, gave the world his *Saxon Dictionary*. During this

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* Vide his *Philosophical works*, in 8vo.

unhappy period, Bishop Walton put to the press that great work the Polyglott Bible, which was printed in six volumes folio at Cambridge, 1657. In medicine, the great Harvey, then grown old, published his *Exercitationes Anatomicae*; and Lower, his admired book, *de Motu Cordis*.

Cromwell had no aversion to the politer arts; he encouraged not only men of knowledge and probity in the law, such as Sir Matthew Hales, but listened to the softer notes of the Muses. In his time, Waller wrote his *Summer Island*; and his fine poem on the progress of his Highness's arms.

I need not mention his much commended panegyric on Cromwell. During the troubles, Denham wrote his *Cooper's Hill*; and all Cowley's poems were printed, Milton, too, published some of his poems in 1645.

Though the play-houses were shut up, many of Shakspeare's, and Beaumont and Fletcher's

Fletcher's plays, were transcribed and published. Nay, Shirley, in 1647, published the works of Beaumont and Fletcher in folio.

Behold, reader! this is the great Reviewer, whose motto cries out to his customers, BEWARE OF COUNTERFEITS.—

Can there be a greater literary impostor than himself?

The Reviewer next takes some slight notice of my remarks on Julius Cæsar. What cost the writer above fifty pages, he dispatches in about nine or ten lines.

The infamous Jefferies, when determined to hang a poor culprit, was never more rapid in his decisions, more dexterous in directing the jury to find him guilty, nor quicker in passing sentence, than this self-chosen judge upon my unhappy remarks.

All the material evidence I had adduced to prove this play was a favourite of the public in Shakspeare's time, in the reign of Charles II. and downward to his late

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Majesty,

Majesty, this man, by a stroke of his pen, at once has erased.

As to poor Leonard Diggs, though Mr. Steevens admits his lines in praise of Shakspeare in his editions, the Reviewer treats him with contempt. It was in vain for me to tell such a man, that the great Dryden had written, in three several plays, three scenes in imitation of that between *Brutus* and *Cassius*; all this testimony amounted to nothing. I quoted in my article of Dryden, some lines from *Aurengzebe*, his best written play, wherein, after giving up his favourite jingles, he breaks forth into a generous eulogium on the superior merit of Shakspeare, and acknowledges he took fire from the scene between *Brutus* and *Cassius*, which in all probability, he had seen admirably acted by those two great masters in their profession, Hart and Mohun.

The Reviewer says coldly, that the play has beauties, but not such as to give
plea-

pleasure on the stage; and for this reason it was declined reviving by Garrick.

I hope the gentleman will not contradict me, when I assert that I have several times seen this play acted with great applause, and to very crowded and brilliant houses. Garrick himself had once, and I believe about the year 1746, a serious intention to represent Cassius. I saw in his *Dictionaire de Bayle*, on that great man's article, a draft of this character written in Mr. Garrick's own hand. Two reasons might have possibly put an end to his intention. The weight of Quin's figure, and his dislike to a Roman shape.*

Julius Cæsar has not been acted with proper attention to the great characters of the play, since the year 1745, when Delane, Sparks, and Barry, represented Brutus, Cassius, and Mark Antony.

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* From a line or two of Shakspeare applied to the Roman actors, I embraced an occasion to give a short view of the Roman theatre, and particularly of the celebrated actors, Æsopus and Roscius. Of this, the Reviewer takes not the least notice.

The Reviewer, having in a few lines dispatched and condemned Julius Cæsar, proceeds with the same furious rapidity to King Lear.

He has on this favourite play, sported about seventeen or eighteen lines on that which cost me seventy pages.

To say that the Reviewer has told two falsehoods in the small compass of the ground he has occupied, would, to civilized persons, appear rude; and yet before I have done with him, I hope my reader will be convinced that he comes within my charge.

I had observed, that the passion of Edgar to Cordelia, was an incident happily imagined; and I wished that Mr. Colman, or some other man of genius, had rescued from Tate the passionate scenes between these lovers, and had connected them with the more distressful parts of the play. I had proved, as far as the light I could gain from scraps of Stage History, that Lear acted by Betterton, in its pristine

tine state, had not pleased, and that it had lain dormant from 1663 to 1685, when Tate revived it with alterations.

The Reviewer is seized with a fit of astonishment, that Mr. Davies should approve the ridiculous love scenes of Edgar and Cordelia by Tate. But where will he point a passage in my remarks to justify this hardy observation?

It is true, the language of Tate is low, mean, and imperfect; but his seizing hold of the love incident, has actually, in the opinion of as good judges as Ralph Griffith, saved the play from oblivion. His illiberal mention of the corps, by which he means the body of actors, deserves nothing but contempt. But this Reviewer is the fairest of all critics, by his frequent contradictions of himself. At the same time that he wishes Garrick had acted Lear to the end, as the author wrote it, he commends Tate for his merit in the catastrophe!—

Let

Let me beg the reader to attend to the following paragraph.

“ Amongst other observations and anecdotes on this tragedy, Mr. Davies commemorates his own performance of Gloucester, and his wife’s Cordelia: Garrick and Cibber are not forgotten, but duly noticed and distinguished.”

Would not any impartial reader from this quotation suppose, I had been arrogant enough to place myself and wife on the same bench with these illustrious performers?

In the Memoirs of Garrick, neither my own name nor that of my wife is once mentioned. In my observations on Lear, speaking of that very valuable actor, Mr. Berry, who represented the part of Gloucester, I said, and I hope with modesty, that when his declining health deprived the stage of his performance, Mr. Garrick called upon me to supply his place in Gloucester; and ‘ that the candour of the audi-
ence

ence gave me more encouragement than I expected.

I also took notice, that Mrs. Davies, during Mrs. Cibber's indisposition, was invited to supply her place in *Cordelia*; and that her figure, look, and deportment, corresponded so well to the character, that she was dismissed with no inconsiderable share of applause.

This unworthy misrepresentation of facts, suits a *literary Bush-fighter*, not a candid Reviewer.

I had bestowed a chapter of above thirty pages, and I hope neither carelessly nor ignorantly composed, on Shakspeare's Antony and Cleopatra. The Reviewer, in two lines and a half, dispatches me and my observations into the land of forgetfulness.

I had indeed discovered some mistaken notes of the great Commentator; and one ridiculous blunder, in which he asserts, that an onion had no moisture:
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this was an unpardonable fault, for which I could expect no remission of punishment.

In my observations on the Rule a Wife and have a Wife, of Beaumont and Fletcher, I enlarged on the merits of these eminent writers; and observing that the plot of this and several others of *their plays* was taken from Cervantes, and various Spanish dramatists, I endeavoured to entertain my readers with a short history of the Spanish theatre. The characters of Cervantes, and Lope de Vega, and their merit as stage writers, were not omitted.

Lope has indeed been called by the glorious title of the Spanish Shakspeare; on so extraordinary a person, equally eminent for his virtues as his genius, I could not speak superficially.

This was not all: to the best of my abilities, I compared the excellencies of these dramatic twins with those of Shakspeare. I held the balance with an even hand, and the reader must judge whether

I have

I have decided with impartiality. I made a concession, indeed; for which perhaps few will thank me: 'That Shakspeare did not so greatly excell them in genius as in the art of producing theatrical effect.'

My good friend the Reviewer dispatches the business in two or three short paragraphs; and his decision is, that Mr. Davies does less than justice to the merit of Beaumont and Fletcher. Unfortunately for the critic, he quotes a passage from my book which seems flatly to contradict his assertion. 'Mr. Davies has very properly said, "that I have looked on Beaumont and Fletcher, as the Disciples, or rather dramatic offspring of Shakspeare, and such an offspring as will ever reflect great honour on the parent."' From so absurd a man, what rational decision can be expected?

On Hamlet, it is true, as he says, I have bestowed 151 pages, and this was a labour of love; for who is so dull as
not

not to be struck with the great and various beauties of that tragedy : ever the favourite of the English nation ? On this subject I dwelt with pleasure, and pointed out some particular passages as worthy of notice, which had escaped more sagacious Commentators.

An author makes a very awkward figure, when he finds himself under the necessity of pointing out to his reader, such particular places in his book as himself most approves ; this I shall not do, except in one instance.

The similarity of sentiments, in the famous soliloquy of *To be, or not to be*, to some of those which Plato has put into the mouth of Socrates, in his *Apology* before the Areopagus, is so striking, that the barely quoting them amounts to a proof. I gave the words of Plato in the original, with the Latin translation. Every scholar to whom I shewed the passage confirmed me in my opinion.

This

This novelty, and many other observations, not, I hope, unworthy of notice, the honest Reviewer has passed over. My 151 pages he has cut up in about five lines; but has graciously, in his authoritative stile, out of near 100, allowed the merit of *four* or *five* remarks.

‘The remainder of these Miscellanies is employed (he says) on the dramatic labours of Dryden, Otway, Lee, Buckingham, Congreve, Betterton, and Cibber. He might have added to them, Sir John Vanburgh.—These eminent writers, like the uncelebrated victims of heroic poetry, in Homer and Virgil, are brought into the field only to be knocked in the head. Indeed he graciously allows, that although my remarks are *trite*, they are just; and that there are besides, theatrical anecdotes and stage history. Upon the merit of at least 300 pages, he peremptorily decides, according to custom, in seven or eight lines. With the man

that will not venture into the fair current of argument, you know not what course to take. Behind his masked battery, he shoots at you like a coward, when you are not on your guard. I shall only observe, that I had, to the best of my power, considered the various styles and abilities of these dramatic writers.

But surely his tender feelings for Colley Cibber, are as farcical and ridiculous as any thing which has dropt from his pen. He says, I rely too implicitly on pamphlets written purposely against him. This assertion the Reviewer knows to be unsupported by truth. I had charged the comedian with insolence, it is true; and was there any thing more universally acknowledged? I would ask this sagacious critic, how I shall come at facts, but by comparing a writer's work with that of his adversary. In the dispute between Dr. Horsely and Dr. Priestly, must I not read both writers, that I may understand the controversy;

or

or must I confine myself to Dr. Horsely alone?

Cibber's Apology was published, as far as I can remember, toward the end of the year 1739. The Laureat, a pamphlet of near 120 pages, came forth in 1740.

The Reviewer, who is dexterous in tripping up the heels of evidence, I think I may presume to say, had never seen it. It appears to have been written by a gentleman well acquainted with the gay world, and particularly conversant in the transactions of the stage. The characters of the comedians, who lived prior to the date of his pamphlet, he seems to have known perfectly. By his information I rescued the characters of some actors, and particularly Verbruggen, from the envious misrepresentations of Cibber: many glaring acts of Colley's theatrical tyranny are here pointed out.

Cibber had too much discernment to reply to this adversary.

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But Mr. Griffith knows I did not entirely rest my proofs of Cibber's insolence on this pamphlet. What does he think of a speech Colley himself has recorded, in answer to Mr. Pope's reproaches for ridiculing an incident in *Three Hours after Marriage*? "Mr. Pope, you are such a sort of man, that I can't answer you as I would." As it is well known that Cibber was a rank coward, his insolence must appear intolerable. Upon the respectable authority of Dr. Johnson, I also told a shameful story of Cibber's intending to affront honest Mr. Whiston, at Tunbridge Wells. But if this will not satisfy the gentleman, let me recommend him to Dr. Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, where he will find more instances of Colley Cibber's impudence and arrogance.

But to proceed to his last section but one, which includes several serious charges against me of slander and love of scandal. "Our critic seems to listen too readily to tales of slander.

flander. The *living* indeed he praises profusely; and though he cannot but echo the loud applauses of the general voice in favour of the dead, yet he seizes every opportunity to remind us of the envy of Garrick, and the *insolence* of Cibber." If the reader will please to re-peruse the first part of the paragraph, all the meaning he will be able to make out, is, that I have been equally profuse in the commendation of the living and the dead.

In three or four passages of the third volume of the Miscellanies, I own I have touched upon, though I have not dwelt on, the envy of Garrick; and what better advice can be given by a writer, than to guard his readers against so pernicious and domestic an enemy? The greatest of poets and philosophers, not only declaim with vehemence against it; but assure us in the strongest terms, that the most cruel tyrants never invented torments so excruciating as envy.

But Garrick's envy may be termed of the professional kind; such as one artist bears to another. As a man of the world, his disposition was entirely exempt from it: he was humane, kind, and generous; ready to promote the happiness of others, and to forward any public or private good. On the stage, he could not bear the least shadow of a rival. Henderson, though a most judicious and excellent actor, must not be put in competition with David Garrick, who was so universal a genius, as to be equal to twelve Hendersons!

If the Reviewer wishes to have a striking instance of professional envy, I will give him one from the Lives of the Painters.

Raphael Urbin, and Michael Angelo, were by all mankind celebrated as the two first artists in all the fine arts; in painting, sculpture, and architecture. They met accidentally in the streets of Rome:

Rome: Raphael, a man infinitely beloved by all the artists, was accompanied by a large body of them. "So, Raphael (says Michael Angelo,) you fall forth like a Prince, with your body guards about you." --- "And you, Michael (replied the other) by yourself, as unattended as the hangman."

The Reviewer's next charge is, that my apology to Mrs. Garrick, in the Preface to the Miscellanies, is but an additional affront to the Memoirs.

Let me entreat the reader to peruse carefully the paragraph in question.

"In writing the life of a great and good man, and such, I presume, with some allowance of human infirmity, I have described Mr. Garrick, the honest Biographer must relate some circumstances of conduct which a tender and affectionate wife cannot read with complacency."

The conduct of Mrs. Garrick has ever been, not only *irreproachable*, but *exemplary*; and the man who could form a design to affront such a woman, must be an abandoned ruffian; and for him who tries to fix such an infamous charge upon me, I can find no name more proper.

Who can help laughing at the Reviewer's affected grief for the family of John Rich, who were angry that I put them in mind, that in writing my Memoirs, I was not transcribing the Lives of the Saints.

I will for once gratify the malice of this man, by telling him a short story. Mr. J. Beard, about eight months since, by his messenger, Mr. Thomas Hull, informed me, that in consequence of my taking notice in the Miscellanies, that the family of Rich resented what I had said of their relation, that I must take notice he would buy no more books of me. At the same time, Mr. Hull was ordered to call

call to my recollection, that Mr. Beard had once purchased of me, Johnson's Dictionary, two volumes folio. The buyer, perhaps, did not know, that the retailer's profit could not amount to more than a few shillings.

It is surely not a very pleasant thing for a man in my situation, to lose any man's custom, and especially that of an old acquaintance, with whom he has spent many a happy convivial hour, and all for an innocent joke. I have too much respect to Mr. Beard's truly amiable character, to acquaint my reader how much money he expended at my shop in twenty-five years.

The actions of our gracious sovereign, of the heir apparent, and of the wisest and best men in the kingdom, are daily canvassed with freedom in the public prints, and yet we hear of no vengeance threatened to the authors and publishers. But it seems the absurdities of a Harlequin-ma-
nager

nager must be sacred from all public censure, though accompanied by the writer with the greatest eulogium of professional merit, and also joined to many social virtues. To conclude this disagreeable subject, I shall inform the family of Rich, that in delineating the portrait of their relation, I was not only kind but **GENEROUS**. Of this assertion Mr. Wilford, or any of the family of Rich, may have when they please an explanation.

The Reviewer now proceeds to his grand accusation. "For (says he), this is candour and mildness, in comparison to the insinuation against one of the last Editors of Shakspeare: such a charge made without proofs of the truth of it, is the most malevolent slander."

Is the Reviewer certain, that the Commentator will think himself obliged to him for meddling in this ticklish matter?

I had observed in the page referred to, that of all abuse, that which is spontaneous

acious and unprovoked, is the most unaccountable; and I might have added, unjustifiable. I asked the Commentator, "what he thought of a gentleman, who, when retired to his country-seat, could find no amusement so pleasing, as writing libels upon his neighbours, and throwing them over their garden-walls, with the malevolent design to torment those who never offended him."

The fact is universally ascribed to the Commentator.

I might in this case, shelter myself under paltry evasion and mean reservation: I might say in excuse, that I asked the gentleman this question without any intended application to him: but this, and every species of lying, I detest.

As I put my name to what I assert, no anonymous questioner can claim a right to an answer: but if the Commentator will himself step forth, and interrogate me, I will authenticate many more pranks of
the

the same peevish nature, by such testimony as no court in Europe will reject.

I had ever paid a just tribute to the great abilities of the Commentator, as my observations on Shakspeare all through the Miscellanies amply testify : I respected his learning, I admired his critical acumen, I acknowledged his occasional generosity : * but I never understood that one man's conferring a favour upon another, invested the donor with a right to treat the person benefited, with insult, or to injure his property.

To all the real accomplishments of the Commentator, I shall ever willingly subscribe. But I shall not venerate those little-nesses which fully the lustre of a character.

I have often heard Dr. Johnson speak of the Commentator ; he knew him well ; and perhaps I may, on another occasion, give the world some of his striking and valuable sketches of him. I shall content myself

* To obviate some false reports, I think it proper to aver, that the sum which Dr. Johnson sent me from Mr. Steevens as a present, was 5l. 5s.

myself in this place, to record what he said once, in alleviation of his strange passion for making people uneasy. The Doctor observed, that the Commentator would never commit *any outrageous act of violence; he would only amuse himself with petty stratagems.*

I think myself obliged to the Reviewer for his information relating to Betterton's picture at Hampton. I have by a note, set that matter right.

The Reviewer is never tired with accusing me of an itch for scandal, of which he says, " he perceives some strokes in the Memoirs of David Garrick, who still lives, he says, in the kind memory of the theatrical world, of which he was once the idol." And pray, Sir, in the Life of this great Actor, is there any thing said in contradiction to this? And have you altered your opinion of those Memoirs, which, on their first publication, you extolled to the skies?

Whose

Whose eulogium you extended through your criticisms of three months? Not a word of scandal was mentioned then, which, if really in the book, was certainly more proper at that time to be censured. But you have since had better information, and it is not difficult to guess from what quarter.—Give me leave to point out two passages in the Memoirs, which the Commentator will always term scandalous. In the first volume, though I did not mention names, I censured his own and his friend, K ——'s illiberal attempt to damn Mrs. Griffith's play of the Platonic Wife, which was saved by the generous struggle of the audience in its favour. In the second volume, I gave my reader a pretty exact account of the Commentator's various efforts to throw Garrick's Jubilee, in honour of Shakspeare, into ridicule.

If the receiving an insidious wound from the hand of a man whom you had known for a long series of years, and with whom

whom you have spent many pleasant hours, be, as it certainly is, a matter of surprise and affliction; the detection of the offender, and bringing him into day light, must be attended with many disagreeable circumstances to a feeling and generous mind. If I do not bring the charge of deceit and treachery home to Mr. Griffith, I shall then be what he terms me, a slanderer and a lover of scandal.

An elegant writer* has observed, that the injured man often alledges in his defence, many circumstances that tend rather to disserve than promote his cause. At the same time he candidly owns, that what appears superficial to others, to him seems of great moment.

If in urging my own defence, I should crowd in materials, which tend to clogg rather than forward my suit, I hope the
reader

* Seed.

reader will pardon a man, who, besides the imbecility of age, has long been afflicted with an alarming as well as a tedious indisposition.

About the middle of May last, I overtook Mr. Griffith and his wife, near the Adelphi. After the usual salute, I asked why he had not as yet reviewed my *Dramatic Miscellanies*? His answer was to this purpose, that my book was not much relished either by himself or his critical corps. If I have committed a mistake, Mr. G. may set me right. I begged him to call to mind, that in that book I had a very great stake; of *that*, he said, he should think.

I seriously reflected when I left him, on the consequences of my book being very severely criticized and dissected in the *Monthly Review*, a periodical work in great credit with the public; six or seven thousand copies of which are dispersed monthly over Great Britain and Ireland.

I could

I could not but know that I was advanced to a great age, and that I had relations who claimed every act of kindness and duty from me.

I had seen Dr. Priestly's accusation of his old acquaintance R. Griffith; who had introduced into his Review as his examiner, Mr. Badcock, his avowed adversary—I feared the worst.—

I knew very well that the Proprietors of periodical criticisms, resemble the Witches in Macbeth, who look into the seeds of time, and know which grain will grow and which will not: that these magi, adored by the vulgar, hold the sheers of destiny; and at their caprice, a book must be saved or condemned. They can give a composition to be reviewed by a man of candour as well as judgment; or to an ill-natured sour critic, who would be determined to manifest his superior knowledge at the expence of the writer. It is a farce for the Reviewer to pretend he has

no power over the persons he employs, when he pays them by the sheet—When gentlemen-writers are the proprietors of a work, the case must differ.

Full of anxiety for the fate of my favourite offspring, I wrote a warm expostulatory letter to Mr. Griffith, in which I urged my advanced age, being then in my seventy-third year; that I could not expect much longer life; and though I might be careless of myself, I had a wife and her niece, who depended on my success in business and authorship. I had flattered myself, in case of my death, that the Miscellanies would produce some small income to them. These, and other topics of the same kind, I enforced with all the energy of which I was master.

I was not content with writing one letter; two I think followed the first.

At last I received a complete answer to all I had written, in a letter from Ralph Griffith, dated the 29th of June last.

“In

“ In this, he assured me he had forborne to acknowledge the receipt of my late letters, waiting to know precisely what character would be given by the Reviewer of my *Miscellanies*: he had now the satisfaction to see, that a truly impartial one, as far as he could judge, would appear. You will see, too, that the strictures are those of a friend, who candidly tells us, that he finds something to blame and something to commend.”

He then proceeds to tell me, that he can depend on my own honest experienced judgment, that I should approve of a critique which holds up a work as an object of criticism, rather than indiscriminate commendation, which wearing the appearance of a favour, is always seen through by the discerning public. He concludes, “ In short, I am glad that the character of your work is dictated by the spirit of impartial justice; *and I will lay any man a good wager, that you will*

think of the article just as I do."—He signs himself my old friend and faithful servant, R. Griffith. This is surely too much, after having been grossly misrepresented, ridiculed, and vilified; and I cannot help thinking that the wager was hazardous, and might have been spared. It calls to my recollection, a story which was told me by the late Mr. Haynes, master of Tom's coffee-house, Russell-street, Covent-garden, which was to this purpose.

—That about forty years since, when Giles Earl, Colley Cibber, and several other gentlemen belonged to the gaming society at that house, a member of the club entered the coffee-room one evening in a very dirty condition: he informed them, that he had been mistaken for another person; had been extremely ill-used by the mob, and had narrowly escaped from being ducked for a pick-pocket. Some of the society put on a serious look; others could scarce contain themselves from enjoying their fellow-

fellow-gamester's distress. Company crowding into the room, one more hardy than the rest, whose name I have forgotten, though, from his non-chalance of assurance, one would imagine scarce any but the Reviewer's favourite, Colley Cibber, was the man, stood forth, and thus addressed the club :

“ I will venture to lay *no small wager*, that the gentleman will himself give a very particular narrative of the kind treatment he met with from the mob, and of his pleasant escape from being drenched like a pick-pocket in a horse-pond.”

Qui facit per alterum facit per se, is an old aphorism. I shall not aver that this is entirely applicable to R. Griffith. But surely the man who adopts the sentiments of another, and in the plainest terms approves them, may be said to be at least an accessory.

I will just give the reader an account of my commencing acquaintance with Mr. Griffith. I was about the year 1742, or

thereabouts, smit with the desire of turning author, and publishing a silly pamphlet; and though a bookseller myself, I chose to have it come out at the famous Jacob Robinson's shop, in Ludgate street. Griffith was brought up under this man, who was first a dealer in spectacles, afterwards a considerable publisher, and then a learned critic; for he printed a periodical criticism on the works of the learned, from which work I suppose R. G. borrowed his hint of a Review: Robinson was intelligent, and I conversed with him; but being nearer in age to Griffith, I preferred his company and conversation to that of the old man.

Many years after this, we were partners with several others, men of superior abilities, in an evening paper; and for sixteen or seventeen years successively, we dined together at least eight or ten times in a year.—If early acquaintance, and convivial society, cannot render the heart

of man generous and feeling, I know not what will.

But the powerful voice of humanity calls on me, to attribute the behaviour of my old friend, not so much to malevolence of mind, as attention to the peculiar interest of himself and partner in the Review.

If one gentleman, who, led by vanity, will offer a round sum to have his praises celebrated; and if another who is malevolent in disposition, will give a bank-note of no small value, to have the person whom he honours with his hatred, severely abused, and sends with a premium the proper materials, what can a Reviewer in this case do? He is, notwithstanding his high office, a trader. He has a wife and children, and a partner. It would not be difficult to convince the public, that such things have been transacted, and are still put in practice. How far this has been my case, I will not say—My thoughts are my own.

I shall conclude this long, and I fear tiresome Postscript, owing in a great measure to the subject, and the Proteus arts of the Reviewer, who assumed all shapes to elude a fair pursuit, with an anecdote applicable to the case of Mr. Griffith.

At that time, in the reign of George I. when Lord Sunderland was First Lord of the Treasury, Sir Richard Steele waited on his Lordship to put him in mind of a certain promise. Sunderland assured him, that he had not forgotten his old acquaintance, and if he would favour him with a visit in three or four days, he would convince him of it.---Sir Richard frankly told his Lordship, that the same answer would be given him were he to call ever so often; for his Lordship did not see that the Treasury itself was the sole cause of his not keeping his word. I protest, Sir Richard, I do not understand you. Why then, my Lord, I will bring it nearer

to

to your discernment, by a story that, I think, is in point.

A countryman took his corn to a miller to be ground. The miller was fatigued, and bade the man grind the corn himself, leave his money, and go home. The fellow seeing a large quantity of fine flour, was tempted to put part of it into his bag, and went off with it. But conscience so tormented him, that he carried back the flour to the miller, and with tears in his eyes confessed his theft. Prythee, honest friend, said the miller, don't vex thyself; the fault did not lie in thee, but in **THE MILL.**

The fault is not in you, R. Griffith, but *the Review.*

APPEN-

APPENDIX.



WHEN Mr. Steevens informed me, that the distributing the notes to his edition of Shakspeare, of 1773, was lodged with Dr. Farmer of Cambridge, I did not presume that he invented a tale to amuse me; for the very existence of a gentleman's character is founded on veracity. But I thought it was very possible his memory might have deceived him.

About three weeks since, I did myself the honour to write to Dr. Farmer, of Emanuel Colledge, Cambridge: I intreated him to acquaint me if the power of distributing notes in the edition of Shakspeare last mentioned, had been vested in him: to which I received a very obliging answer. I shall present it to the reader verbatim.

To

To Mr. Thomas Davies, Bookseller
and in Russell Street, Covent Garden.

Emanuel College, Feb.* 2, 1785.

Sir,

AN accidental avocation has
deprived me of an opportunity of giving
you an answer by an earlier post.

Give me leave to assure you, that though
I have read your *printed* Notes on *Shak-
speare* with pleasure, if not always with
conviction, and shall be glad to read
more; yet I never saw, or asked to see,
or was offered to be *shewn*, any *Manuscript*
Note of yours in my life.

I hope this fully answers your *Que-
tion*; and that you will believe me,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

R. FARMER.

The

* Put through haste for March, for my Letter
was dated the 18th of February.

The following characteristic Poem was written by Mr. Garrick, soon after his arrival from the Stratford Jubilee, and was never published before. He made a present of it to a friend, from whom the writer of the Miscellanies received it.

THE CHARACTER AND SKELETON
OF
MASTER STEPHEN.

WRITTEN BY D. GARRICK, SEPT. 1769.

IN the *Militia* I am bred,
For prowess I am known :
I am a Bard !—my verse is read
By every fool in Town.

Garrick himself with me can't act,
" ZANGA I am, indeed !"
'Twas then I prov'd my head was crackt—
Twelve ounces did I bleed.

Give me the Play'r who'll burst his veins,
Eyes from their sockets start :
He, who don't roar, or screw such strains,
Feels not a Hero's part.

Nature

Nature to me has lent the form
Of RICHARD—all agree :—
Like him I *wheelde, lie, and storm*,
And I've his *back and knee*!

I'm *handsome*, too, the Ladies think;
I beat 'em in abuse;
You've smelt my high prophetic stink;
—Tom T—d—n of the News.

I will a *Sancho Panza* be—
Who contradicts my claim?
I dare attack a *Mulberry Tree*,
And crop, lop, chop the same.

I'm *Pyramus*, the Lion too,
Can rend, rant, roar and rove;
Then bend, and little *Thistle-woo*,
Just like a sucking Dove.

I'm * *Philalethes, Des-squeeze*—oh!
Antiavonis, Brags!
I'm *Proteus* true, from head to toe,
A Cur, a Toad, an Ass!

I'm

* Signatures used by this author, for purposes of abuse, in the Public Advertiser.

I'm the Affassin in the dark,
 That stabs my first best friend ;
 Yet have a smirking smile, d'ye mark,
 To answer any end.

With me when woman is in love,
 My tender feeling's such ;
 I faint, kick like a dying Dove,
 To find I've charm'd so much.

Then hartshorn, salts, and eau de luce,
 Fly to the Captain's aid :
 And uproar gallops through the house,
 From Phillis to her maid.

Colossus Cupid, the polite,
 Baptiz'd my neutral form :
 I wheedle, lie, swear wrong is right,
 And, when confuted—florm.

Pray, did you never see me ride ?
 I spread out like a Sailor !
 And stick into the horse's side,
 Just like a London Taylor.

“ What

"What Caitiff's this, that thus* doth talk?"

So, you've not read my Ode;
Pray, did you never see me walk?
For, then I'm all abroad!

"Yes, I have seen thee, paltry thing!

Crawling 'tween earth and sky:

A dirty dab-chick on the wing,

That can both hop and fly."

Mr. Garrick, when he read this poem to his friend, acted the person described with so much humour, that it gave the highest merriment.

Some notes are wanted, not difficult to write; but such a task I will not undertake.

* *Le Stue*, a Parody on Garrick's Ode on Shakspeare.

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John (Baker) Baker, James II. 1701, 1702.



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